I. J. of Jesus

Behold the Saints! See the Dark Hollow Shines!
How Radiant & under These Confines!
So Suffering Martyrs Torn by Tyrants Rage
Pleading their Saviours Cause their Pains Courage

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THE SUFFERINGS OF THE SON of GOD *Manifeſt in the Fleſh.*

Written Originally In *Portugueze*, by *Father Thomas of Jeſus*, Of the Holy Order of The Hermits of St. *Auguſtin*: Afterwards Tranſlated into *French*; And Now Done Into *Engliſh*.

The Firſt Volumn.

By *R. WELTON.* D. D.

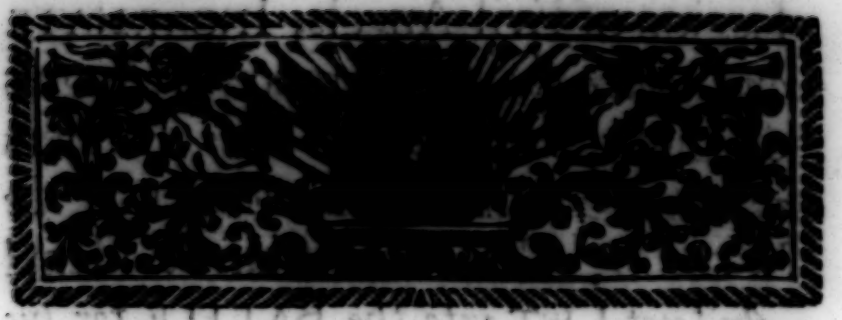
Behold The Lamb of God which Taketh Away The Sin of The World! St. John 1. 29.

LONDON:

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SAINT GEORGE'S * WORCESTER * SAMSONE PLACE

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THE PREFACE OF THE English TRANSLATER.

IN a Period of the World, when the CHRISTIAN FAITH has been undermin'd, and Religion ſet a BLEEDING to the laſt Convulſions, in the Actual Struggles of a Diſſolution, And its DIVINE Author Challeng'd even to his VERY BEING; When the OLD DRAGON is let

looſe *to* BLAST *the* TRUTH; *And his* Legion of Evil-Angels, INCARNATE *and under the* Appearance *of* Angels of Light, *have ſet up their* Banners *in defiance to the* REDEEMER *of the* WORLD; *Can a* Chriſtian *be* ſilent! *And not* LIST *into the* BATTLE *for his* SAVIOUR!

The Controverſie is no longer, Now, *Of what* Perſwaſion *we are, in* reſpect to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *but whether we* HAVE *a* CHRIST *or* No! *Sure, this* APOSTACY, *This* LITERAL BLASPHEMY *againſt the* HOLY GHOST, *will take down the* Partition-Wall; *ſo far, at leaſt, as to engage us* ALL, *in an univerſal Concurrence, againſt the* very Powers of Hell; *I mean, All ſincere and thinking Men, of whatſoever Denomination, who will not* Sacrifice *the* Glories *of the* Chriſtian Profeſſion, *to the* Prejudices *of* Education *or A* Piquant Malice.

To Encourage ſo Religious a Purpoſe, that I may not, even under the ſevereſt

of

of my own Trials, be out of the Number of those who Plead the Cauſe of the Righteous God! *I have put my little Strength, to* recover Souls *out of that* Lethargy, *that* Decay *of the* Life of Religion *which has almoſt Buried the very* NOTION *of* JESUS CHRIST, *the* TRUE GOD, *in Oblivion; and made way for the* Sons of Perdition, *whom God has given up to a* Reprobate Senſe, *to* Deny the Lord that Bought them, *as a Juſt Judgment upon their* Other Unnatural Diſobedience.

And, to kindle in our Heart that Celeſtial Fire, *that* Flame *of* Love and Devotion to God, *which ſeems almoſt* extinguiſh'd *among Men, I have Rendred the Works of a* Holy Confeſſor, *written, by him, in a Dungeon, and under all the* Hardſhips *of a* Slave, *into the Language of my own Country; In which moſt Divine* Syſtem *of* Contemplation, *whoſoever will but give Himſelf an Opportunity to Read it, will find ſo much of the* Spirit of

Religion; *ſo much of the* very Soul of Seraphick Love; *Such Strong Impreſſions from the* ineffable Endearments *of* our Saviour's amazing Charity; *and ſuch forceable* Allurements *to attract the Soul to Him; that it will not be in the Power of* Devils, *or this* NEW-SPRUNG GENERATION *to Poiſon that* Immortal Being *into a Diſ-belief of the* MYSTERY *of thoſe* ineſtimable Merits, *by which we are* PURCHASED, *or to withdraw it from that ſacred Object of* Love, *and* Life, *and* Glory.

As for ſome Raptures, We ſhall meet with, by which This Holy Saint ſeems to have been Tranſported above Himſelf; And his Contemplative Soul Rais'd, from his Dark, and Solitary Priſon to THE CELESTIAL COURT, *Let The Reader Judge of* Them *as God ſhall Give him Light; For my Part, I muſt Own, They Appear no Otherwiſe to me, than as ſo many* Sublime, *and* Elevated Strains, *of an*

an Exalted Genius; As when The Holy Prophets Call upon The Floods, and Stars, and All the Reſt of the Inanimate Creatures to Record Divine Truths, and Teſtifie Their Makers Glory! However, To Soften the Severities of Some Squeamiſh Stumblers at a Straw, I have taken Care, In The Following Edition, to Diſtinguiſh Theſe FLIGHTS, by A Smaller Character than The Reſt; By which, at Leaſt, It will be Seen, How much The PURER GOLD, Out-weighs The Swimmings; And, In This, I have, alſo, Done The Original Author Juſtice, As I make a Conſcience to Do, by Tranſmitting his Seraphick Devotions to the World In the Same Image and Complexion that I found them: For I cannot but Look upon it, as a VILE FORGERY as well as an Undeniable Inſtance of VANITY and SELF-CONCEIT, which a Chriſtian Temper muſt Abhor, and An Honeſt Spirit Deſpiſe, to Pare Any Thing off, (which In Fact is no Better

than to Filch it) from an Author's Works, tho' it be to Throw it away, under any Pretence whatsoever; Or, to Palm upon Him That *which, perhaps, Never Enter'd Into his Thoughts; By which means* SOME EXCELLENT PEICES *have been Treated, Like* David's * Ambaſſadors (who were Sent Back Half-Bearded, and Under a Diſgraceful Figure;) *And, By an Odd Sort of Amalgama, Chymick'd Into A* Strange Shape, *and* Monſtrous Tranſmutation.

* 2 *Sam.* 10. 4.

If There be Any Notions Suggeſted, In the following Contemplations that Strain hard upon the Scrupulous, Let The Author Anſwer for them; The Tranſlator is not Concern'd farther than to Repreſent him faithfully, without which he might be juſtly Cenſur'd of Injuſtice and Deſign.

For the Reſt, I Refer the Chriſtian Reader to the following Hints of F. Alleaume, *In his Preface to This Work, In which He will find Convinc-*

ing

ing Arguments of Its Worth, and Design, for The Good of Souls.

Wherefore I shall say no more Here, to Recommend it, to my Fellow Christians, as a Treasure, *I have met with by* the Providence of God, *to my* own great Support, *and* Comfort in Distress, *than that it must needs be of* INFINITE, *and* PERPETUAL USE *and* ADVANTAGE, *to* EVERY *Person, Degree, and Circumstance of Men whatsoever. To whom I heartily Recommend it, Beseeching* God *that from these Glorious Images of Our Dear Saviours Sufferings for our Souls, we may Learn to be Still,* more and more *Confirm'd In our Resolutions to Endure also, with most Unshaken Constancy, whatever the Divine Providince shall think fit to Try us with; And* REJOYCE THEREIN, *till* God *shall Vouchsafe us a Happy Issue Out of All Our Troubles and Afflictions, or Translate us, out of this Miserable World, Into* Those Everlasting Habitations, *where They will be*

Chang'd

Chang'd Into That Glorious Recompence of Reward *which is Certainly Laid up In Store for Them that Love* God *more Than This* Present World, *And of which They Cannot be* DEPRIVED.

THE

THE PREFACE OF *Father* G. ALLEAUME.

THIS Book Was Originally Written In Portugueze, *By A Holy, Religious Man, In The Year* 1578. *During A Very Long and Severe Captivity Among The* Moors *of* Africa, *and under The Actual Experience of the Cross! It is So full of* UNCTION, *And, The*

The most Moving Thoughts, *Upon The Subject of* SUFFERING, *That It is no wonder It has been, Since, Printed In So many Languages.*

It No Sooner Appear'd In Portugueze, *but It was Recorded with A* General Approbation; *And Lookt upon as* A TREASURE *of* GRACE *and* LIGHT *for Every Soul, that is* Labouring *Under* The Pressures of Affliction. *It soon made its way Into* Spain, *where* Don Christophoro Ferreira *of* Sampayo *Translated It Into* Spanish: *From Thence It Spread as far as* Italy, *where It was put Into That Language by one Father* Lewis Flori, *A Jesuite: From* Italy *It was Transmitted to* Germany, *And Then The Reverend Father* Henry Lamperter, *Another Jesuite, Turn'd it into Latin, And Printed it at* Munich, *in* Bavaria, *with*

The

The Title of Ærumnæ Domini Nostri Jesu Christi; *And I have Lately been Inform'd that it has been put out in French, about Forty Years Since, And Printed At* Lions, *Under this Title,* Travaux De Jesus: *But I could not Think it Proper to Give it this Inſcription, for Two Reaſons: Firſt Becauſe It looks as if this Title, of* Travaux *or* The Labours Of Jesus, *had been Borrowed from that of* The Labours Of Hercules; *And that it was Neceſſary to Separate All Profane Idea's from A Subject ſo Sacred as this is; And In the Next Place, For that The Word* Sufferings, *Seems to me to be much more Nearly Related to A Work of This Nature, Than If It had been Call'd His* Labours.

I *have Adventur'd upon This Tranſlation, at The Requeſt of Some*

Some Perſons, as Diſtinguiſhable for Their Singular and Exemplary Piety, And Zeal for God's Honour, as The High Rank and Character they Bear In the World, who having Been Charm'd with Reading it, In Other Languages, Concluded It muſt Needs do A Great deal of Good, if It were Tranſlated Into French; *And Therefore, were Deſirous That The Benefits They Received from it, In Their Own Private Capacity, Might be Communicated to The World,*

The Deſign of The Holy Author, is to Inſtruct All Chriſtians Under Afflictions, How to be In Love with The Croſs Providences of God; To look upon Them, as A TREASURE *which* OUR MOST MERCIFUL FATHER *has put Into Their Hands, to* Improve upon Them, *by A Right and Holy Uſe: And, Becauſe Nothing can be More Effectual*

fectual to Perſwade us to The Love of The Croſs, than The Example of THE SUFFERING JESUS, *He has Pickt Out, and Selected* THAT *which was moſt* Painful *and* Grievous, *In The Life of* Our Bleſſed Saviour, *And Digeſted it Into Fifty Chapters, which He Calls The* LABOURS, *or* SUFFERINGS *of* JESUS CHRIST.

In Every Chapter He has done Two Things; Firſt He has Expounded THE MYSTERIES *with Great Nicety and Clearneſs, From whence He Proceeds to Draw ſuch Doctrinal Inſtructions, as may Conduce to Regulate Mens Manners, and Promote Piety and Holineſs; And then, He Dilates, and* Melts His Soul In Affection, *Towards The Bleſſed Jeſus, upon Each of His Sufferings; And That, after A Manner, that is No Leſs* SOLID *and* INSTRUCTIVE, *than* Moving, *and* Engageing of The Soul! *So*

That

That The First Part, of it, Properly Speaking, Is An Exposition Upon The Mystery; And, The other, As it were A Religious Conference *with Our Blessed Saviour, In which, The Soul Addresses Him In Such Passionate Strains, as might Inspire The most Insensible, and Obdurate with a most Flaming Zeal and Devotion.*

But, That which is most Surprising, and Peculiar to This Work, is, That The Author Could Maintain Such an Equal Strength of Devotion, *Under Each Head, of This Subject, for Ten or Twelve Pages together, without Flagging, In his* Strain of Thoughts; *And, Be so far from Flattening, or Sinking In Them, that Instead of Representing his Idea's in Fainter, or Weaker Colours, The farther He Goes on, He Seems to have, Still,* Brighten'd *Into the more Sublime;*

And,

And, In a more Elevate Rupture, to Spiritualize In Affection, and Raiſe his Images to A Greater Height, *And Paint with A more* Lively, *and* Raviſhing Complexion.

As He had not the Opportunity of Any Books, In His Priſon, where the Barbarians, hardly Left Him A Rag to Cover him, whatever He Wrote was from the Immediat Dictate *and* Inſpiration *of God; And what His Memory Suggeſted to Him, ſo that It's not to be Expected that Any* Thing *is Borrow'd Here from Other's Works; nor that This ſhould be Embelliſh'd with Citations. In the Room of this, We find Throughout the whole Book, a Great Deal of Excellent Good ſence; Of moſt Orthodox, and Sound Doctrine; A moſt Profound and Exquiſite Knowledge of Religion; A Sublime and Exalted Elevation of Thought, and A Quick and Sprightly Brightneſs and Vivacity of Imagination, that, In my Opinion, is*

not to be Met with In other Books of Devotion.

It's this which makes me Hope, that Whoever Reads This Book will be Improv'd by it; For, Besides that there is hardly Any Person Living, that does not meet with something, that Goes Cross with Him, and Perplexes his Affairs, In this World; And, by the most Merciful Providence of God, the Circumstances, Even of those who are In the Highest Stations, and Quality whatsoever, are not Exempt from the Strokes of Fate, and the Cross; There can be None, but whose Own Experience will Convince them that this is A most Proper Book, to Affect the Hearts of Sinful Men; To Awaken and Rouse up the Consciences of those that Are Dead in Sin; *And to* Comfort *and Support* The Righteous *Under the Various and Manifold Oppressions they are Sure to meet with in* This Wicked World.

It may also serve to Furnish the Soul with the most Excellent Meditations, Because

Because it Comprehends the whole Life of Our Blessed Saviour, Excepting what Generally goes Under the Denomination of the JOYFULL MYSTERY'S; *the Author having, All along, taken Care to Sublimate His thoughts, and Give them A Turn of Something Spiritual, and that strikes upon the Passions.*

As to what Remains, I think my Self Oblig'd to Acquaint The Publick, with the Method I have Taken, In this Translation: I have Follow'd the Original as Faithfully as 'tis Possible: But Yet I must Own, that I have taken the Liberty, tho' but very Seldom, to Lessen the Tautologies; To Soften those Metaphors and Allegorical Expressions, which Seem'd too Harsh, and which Our Language will not Allow; To Leave Some Conjectural Notions, as I Found Them; To Contract some very Prolix Passages; And, to Explain Others that Were too Obscure.

This Work is Printed In Two Volumns for The Benefit and Convenience

of The Readers; But, Becauſe Some may Apprehend that Theſe may be too Large, and Cumberſom, It is Divided Into Four Parts; That The Reader may, if he Likes it Better, make Four Volumns, In the Binding of it, which will Alſo Anſwer, and Serve for Meditations, *and* Lectures *for The Four Quarters of The Year; The Firſt Volumn Treating on The Sufferings of our Bleſſed Saviour During The Private State of His Life; The Second, of The Paſſages He met with in His* Publick Miniſtration; *The Third, During His* Paſſion, *And The Laſt, Of* His Death. *So That Here are The moſt Uſeful Inſtructions To be met with, whereby we may Learn, to Appropriate* ALL *The Afflictions, that may Aſſail us under Every Period of our Lives, to Our* Great Advantage! *I Beſeech Almighty God, from*

from The Bottom of my Heart, to Stamp His Bleſſing upon This Work. And that every Soul that Reads it may find, Therein, The Manna which is Hidden In The Holes of The Rock, *that is, In The Wounds, the* Bitter, *but* Meritorious Paſſion, *of our* SUFFERING REDEEMER!

AN ABSTRACT OF THE LIFE OF Father THOMAS of JESUS.

TOGETHER

With Some Spiritual Inſtructions of The Same Author, to prepare us for the Reading with Profit, THE SUFFERINGS *of* JESUS CHRIST.

THIS Holy Confeſſour was Deſcended from the Loins of *Ferdinand Alvares De Andrada*, A Nobleman of One of the Greateſt Families In *Portugal:* He was but Ten Years

Years Old when This Noble Peer Gave him up Into the Hands of Father *Lewis* of *Montoya* A Monaſtick, of A Moſt Strict Life, In the Order of The Hermits of St. *Auguſtin*, to Train Him up In the Fear of God, And the Improvements of A Good Literature and Education: At the Age of Fifteen He took upon him the Habit of the Same Order, In the Monaſtery Dedicated to the Mother of God *de Gratia*; And After He had Gone thro' the Courſe of his Studies, In Philoſophy, and Divinity, at *Conimbria*, And had Perform'd the Publick Exerciſes with A Great Deal of Succeſs, He was Made Principal of the Novices; In which Province He Manag'd with ſo Careful and Bleſſed A Conduct, towards the Advancement of All Solid, and Subſtanital Vertues, and Particularly THAT which is the Life of All, *The Love of God*, and *the Spirit of Devotion*, that In Courſe, the Whole Fraternity

Reap'd the Benefit of his moſt Holy and Powerful Inſtructions.

As He took Notice of Several of *that Sacred Fraternity*, who Bearing Strong *Towards the Mark of Our High Calling*, Travell'd Into *Italy*, Where there were Certain Religious Convents of their Own Order, who Liv'd Yet More *Recluſe*, and Under the moſt *Strict* and *Spiritual Abſtraction* From The World, He Was ſo Charm'd with the Exactneſs of their Rules, that He Reſolv'd to Found One of the ſame Auſtere Diſcipline In *Portugal*: Father *Lewis de Montoya* was Extremely Pleas'd with his Projection; And *Cardinal Henry*, who Afterwards was King, Back'd Him with his Patronage and Protection: But The Holy Father Met ſo Many Rubs and Obſtacles In his Way, and had ſuch a Storm and Uproar Rais'd Againſt him, that he was Forc'd to Quit his Intention, by the Advice of Thoſe Who were The Beſt Friends

and

and Well-wiſhers to his Propoſal: However He Bore this Perſecution, and the Fury Of his Oppoſers, with ſuch A Calm, ſo Sweet A Temper, and Reſign'd A Spirit, as Might Well Become A Pattern, for the moſt Chriſtian Imitation, and Fit to Edify the World by; Particularly, He Made it his Buſineſs to Return Good Offices to Thoſe who had moſt withſtood him; And He took an Occaſion, One Day, to ſay, to a Friend of His, who Seem'd Aſtoniſh'd at His *Humility*, and *Reſignation*, 'That In 'the Point of doing Good to Our 'Neighbour, we muſt not take the 'Meaſures of Our Good Will to him 'from his Conduct towards us: For 'that God, Never makes Our Meri-'ts the Standard of the Diſpenſations 'of the Divine Favour; But Derives 'a Thouſand Bleſſings upon us, at 'the Very time that We are Treſ-'ſpaſſing againſt his Goodneſs.

He

He allow'd himſelf but Very Little Reſt; And Apply'd Himſelf ſo Continually to the Duty of Prayer, and to Reading the Eccleſiaſtical Fathers, that, In a Little Time, He Became a Perfect Rabbi In the Knowledge of thoſe Sacred Penmen: And, He had This Particular Gift from God, to make Others taſt the ſweets of their Divine and Wholſom Doctrines; He had an Extraordinary Impulſe to the Promoting God's Service, An Unbounded Charity to the Poor and the Sick; Inſomuch that theſe Uncommon Qualifications Gain'd him ſo Great a Reputation, In the Kingdom, that *Sebaſtian*, the then King, drew him from his Retirement to Attend his Perſon In that Unfortunate Expedition of his Into *Africa*, In the Year 1578. One would wonder to ſee of what Extreme Service a Perſon of his Holy Function was to the whole Army, by the Indefatigable Care He took to prevent their Exceſſes

ceſſes and Diſorders, and to Suppreſs the Diſtempers Both of their Souls and Bodies too: It Happen'd that whilſt he was Animating the Soldiers, In the Heat of a Battle, to Attaque the Infidels with Bravery, He was Wounded with an Arrow In His Shoulder, and was afterwards Taken Priſoner by a Moor, and ſold to A *Morabut*, which is the Name They Give to The Mahometan Monks In that Country: This *Morabut* treated him, at Firſt, with Humanity Enough, And tempted him with great Offers to turn Renegade and Renounce Chriſt; But when this Infidel Found that All this Artifices were In vain, and ſo far from Anſwering his Execrable purpoſe that, On the Other hand, he had much ado to Withſtand the Holy Father's Arguments, who Preſs'd him to Embrace the Chriſtian Faith, by ſhewing him, moſt Convincingly, the Abſurdity of the Alchoran, he had Recourſe to Violence;

Violence; He ſtript him of his very Cloaths, Loaded him with Fetters, and Threw him Into A Dreadful Dungeon, Where he Order'd him to be Barbarouſly Bruiſed and Beaten, Allowing him Nothing for his Succour but What Would juſt keep Life and Soul Together.

And Here it Was that This Holy Captive Compoſed this Book of *the Sufferings of his Bleſſed Saviour*, for the Comfort of his Fellow Priſoners, having no Other Succour to Adminiſter unto them! And He Could not proceed, even In this pious Undertaking, but at ſome few hours In the full day Light, and then Only by the help of a faint Glimmering of Light Which came in thro' a ſmall Breathing-hole In his Dungeon; Whilſt the Infidel Patroon of his, Was So far from Softening or abating his Barbarity, that he daily Aggravated and Increas'd His Rigorous and Cruel Uſage, Being Reſolv'd to heighten his

his Torments 'till he dy'd, if He Could Not Rob Him Of his Redeemer!

Don Franciſco D' Acoſta, Whom King *Henry* had ſent In the Quality of Embaſſador, to *Morocco*, to Treat about the Ranſom of the Chriſtian Captives, Being Inform'd of the Miſerable Condition of this Suffering Confeſſor, with much ado got Him Out of the hands Of this Barbarian; And Lodg'd him In the Houſe Of a Chriſtan Merchant, to Recover his Strength; Where he ſtay'd not Long but Went to *Morocco*, Within a Few days after: And, as ſoon as it was known he was Come thither, the *Portugueze* Nobility, who had been taken In the War, and Expected their Ranſom, would have kept him with them; But, with Great Importunity he got the Liberty of going to the *Sagena*, which was the Priſon of the Poor Chriſtian Slaves, (where the Provoſt (or Sherif) Had Two Thou-

Thouſand Priſoners of Different Nations In his Cuſtody) Aſſuring them that he had a Thouſand times Rather Stay among them, and would ſooner Repair his Health there, than amidſt all the Conveniences and Plenty In the World. It fell out as he foretold 'em: for In a very Little time he was perfectly Recover'd; After which he Devoted himſelf Entirely to Comfort And Succour The diſtreſſed Wretches In that place, for when they Left off their days Work, and In thoſe Intervals they had allow'd them, for Reſpite from their drudgery, he got them together by the Tinkling of A little Bell to pray with and to preach Comfort, and their duty, to them: And this he did with ſo Exact a Diſcipline and Regularity that made this Confuſed place look more Like *A Religious Houſe* than the Priſon of a

Sett

Sett of Enſlaved Deſtitutes: He Begg'd Alms of the Rich for the Poors Succour; And, when Any Differences aroſe among them He made them up and Reconcil'd them; He Rectified whatever he met with of Irregularity In the place; And went thro' all thoſe Difficult Fatigues with a Zealous deſire to do Good, and had Nothing Grievous to him, under all his Labours, but this Single Inſtance, that it Griev'd his Righteous Soul, to ſee ſome of thoſe Miſerable Wretches Live In a Licentious and debauch'd manner Under that ſad Condition of *A Turkiſh Bondage.*

His Charity was not Confin'd only to the Chriſtian Captives, but he made it his Buſineſs alſo to Viſit thoſe *Renegades* who had *Apoſtatiz'd* and *Fallen from the Faith*; Theſe He Exhorted to Return

turn to the Catholick Faith and Unity and forgot Nothing That might Poſſibly bring them Back Into that Path which Leadeth Unto God: And God Gave Succeſs, and So great A Bleſſing to his Labours, that ſome having Recanted their Apoſtacy Return'd to *the Church of Chriſt*; And others SUFFER'D MARTYRDOM In *Defence*, and *Teſtimony of the Faith*: Peter Navarre Was One of the moſt Remarkable; He was of *Madrid* and had Turn'd Mahometan In *Africa*: The Sherif, who had a particular Kindneſs for Him, had Entruſted him In an Office; and Among the Moors They Call'd him *Alcaide Amet*: Upon his Attempt to Eſcape Into Chriſtendom with Several other Chriſtian Slaves, under his Care, he was taken and Brought Back to *Morocco*, where, after he had Endured the moſt Ter-

Terrible and Inexpreſſible Torments, he was at Laſt CRUCIFIED, *Confeſſing Jeſus Chriſt* to his Laſt Breath *Antony Mendez*, A Clergyman of *Portugal*, having Become a Slave with Our Reverend and pious Author, had Received ſo much Advantage by his Example and his Doctrine, that he might be Call'd THE SECOND In Zeal and charity, to this Holy Father; And Imitated him In the ſame Good Works and ſervices to the Diſtreſſed Chriſtians In *Barbary*: And, at Laſt, he SUFFER'D MARTYRDOM, In the City of *Morocco*, After Seven Young Men of *Portugal*, who having been taken Priſoners at the Battle of *Alcuzere*, had been Pages to the Provoſt.

This Holy Father *Thomas* of *Jeſus* was A Captive In *Africa* about Four Years; And During all this time, the Counteſs *De Linares*

and his Other Relations, took a Great Deal of pains to Procure his Liberty: King *Philip* the Second, had, Himself, Recommended this Affair to *Don Pedro Vanegas De Cordua*; his Ambassadour at *Morocco*; And he had Begun to treat about his Ransom: But so soon as he heard on't, this Zealous Servant of God, Protested, that whether he were Ransomed or A Slave, he was Resolv'd to Spend his Life In the Service of the Poor Christian Slaves In *Morocco*; That it would be A Pleasure to him, to spend the Mony that was Intended for his Ransom, upon those Poor Souls, whose Condition might more Necessarily Require it than his Did; That, as for him, he look'd upon himself to be Incomparably In a more happy Condition, to have it in his Power to Live and Die a Slave, for the Benefit

fit and Salvation of his Brethren, than in Any Liberty They Could Give him: And he Wrote, to the very ſame Purpoſe, to thoſe of his Relations, who had been at moſt Pains and Coſt about his Ranſom; And Particularly to One of his Nephews, who was a *Monk*, moſt Earneſtly Importuning him, to Engage the Reſt of his Family, to think no more of his Ranſom, for that he was Satisfied that God had Call'd him to that Condition; That he Found himſelf Extremely Contented in it, And that his Only Uneaſineſs was to Find himſelf leſs Cruelly Treated than the Reſt of his Fellow Slaves, thro' the Care and Favour of the *Portugal* Ambaſſadour to him.

To the painful and Laborious fatigues of his Zeal and the Severity's of his Enſlav'd Condition, he Added Yet, One more, Even that

of Severe Pennance: *Faſting* and *Diſcipline* were his Conſtant Practice; He was Never free from the Exerciſes of Mortification and the Rigours of the Croſs, And He Doubled them In Lent, altho' He Preached Every day, which Threw him Into A Deſperate fit of Sickneſs: He was ſoon Senſible that he was near his End; And Settled himſelf for THAT IMPORTANT WORK with the moſt *Solid Piety and Devotion*; He Received The Sacraments of the Church on Holy *Thurſday* In Paſſion Week, and the *Portugal* Ambaſſador being Come to Viſit Him, On Good *Friday*, He moſt Earneſtly Recommended the Care of the Poor Captives to his Excellency's Compaſſion, the Great Weakneſs the Embaſſador found him In, made him Conclude that this Holy Saint had but a few Moments to the End of his Race;

Race; And, whether it were Out of the Love he Bare him, or the Curioſity to ſee how THE BLESSED OF GOD Receive their Summons and make their Launch Into Eternity, He ſtay'd to Behold the upſhot of his Change; But the Holy Father, having Aſſured Him that his hour was not yet Come; And that he ſhould not Depart this Life 'till after *Eaſter*, His Excellency Departed.

This dying Father having Underſtood, upon the *Eaſter Monday*, that ſome of the Slaves, Impatient of their Bondage, and deſpairing of ever being Ranſom'd, had thoughts of turning *Mahometans*, Sent for them to his Bedſide, And, Gathering what Little Strength he had Left, He Incourag'd and Exhorted them to Perſeverance; He told them *the very day* when their Ranſom would

Certainly Come; And made them promiſe him they never Would Renounce THAT REDEEMER who *had Bought them.* And, In A Moment, after he had done Speaking, Even whilſt the Word JESUS was In his Mouth, with a Smiling Countenance he Render'd up his Soul to God. On the 17 day of *April.* In the year of our Lord 1582. In the Fifty Third Year of his Age, and the Fourth of His Captivity: And, what was very Remarkable, *The Ranſom of theſe Slaves was brought them, on the Same day that He Foretold them it would be ſo.*

Spiri-

Spiritual Advice

GIVEN BY,

Father THOMAS of JESUS.

CHAP. I.

A Sermon Upon The Fruit we Ought to Bring Forth, from The Conſideration of The Sufferings of Our Bleſſed Saviour.

IT Happens but too Often, that Thoſe who Aſpire after The Chriſtian Perfection, Deceive Themſelves In The Method which they take about Spiritual and Religious

ligious Matters: When They Read The Lives of Saints, And Conſider their Auſterities, their Zeal, their Extaſies, And Other *Extraordinary Graces*, which the Spirit of God Operates In thoſe Mortified Souls, They are Charm'd with Thoſe Admirable Qualifications which They Behold, In Them, without Reflecting what the Foundation was, to ſo Glorious A Superſtructure; And By what Ways and means They Grew up Into ſo *Spiritual A Building*: This is A Miſtake ſo much the more Groſs and Palpable, In any Age, wherein the Practice of Piety is Become more Univerſal, And Profeſs'd, and Acknowledg'd by the General Approbation; Altho', God knows, There are but very Few, who Apply Themſelves Seriouſly, and in Earneſt to it; Or Underſtand what it is By Experience.

That

That which Contributes, to the Eſtabliſhment of this Opinion, is, That, God, who is ever Wonderful In his Works, Oftentimes Communicates himſelf with ſuch *Unction, and Light*, upon Our Firſt Attachments to his Service, that we no Sooner Begin Our Advances In Religion, and find thoſe Sweet and Raviſhing Impreſſions upon Our Souls, but we Preſently fancy that we have already made a Conſiderable Progreſs in Our Duty; Like a Man, who has little or no Skill in Painting, when he Beholds the Rough Draughts of ſome maſter Painter, Admires the Performance, and Looks upon it as a Finiſht Piece; Whereas another, more Acquainted in this Art, knows that it will Require a Great deal more Time and Pains before it Comes to the Laſt ſtrokes that are to Complete it: So theſe Deluded Souls, upon II.

upon Every Illaps they feel, of the Divine grace within them, Comparing it with what they have Read or heard of, Concerning the Secret Comforts of the Saints of God, Preſently Conclude themſelves Under that perfect and Happy ſtate; Raiſe a Building Without Foundation; And Find, at laſt, by their Fatal Relapſes, how Unhappily they have deceiv'd themſelves.

III. There are Three things which, generally, diſcover this Illuſion: The Firſt is a Certain ſort of Security, to which they falſely give the Name of Peace; On which they Place ſuch a ſtrong Relyance, that they will not Hearken, any more, to the Inſtructions or Advice of any Other Perſon; And, upon all Occaſions Cenſure and Condemn Others under the Pretence of Zeal: Although the Saints of God tell us, that, in matters that Relate to God

God we Ought to Conſult Perſons of Experience, and THEREUNTO APPOINTED; That, it is to be a Stranger to the Divine, Contemplative Life, for any One to Abound In his Own ſenſe; And that the *Characteriſtick* of *True Vertue*, is to pay a great Regard to Our Neighbour; And to Entertain a mean and Low Opinion of Ones Self. The Next miſtake, which is a Conſequence of this, Is an Attachment and Adhæſion to their Own Will, which Renders them Incapable to Bear the Leaſt Contradiction, Under a ſhew of their Love of Truth: From whence they are, Generally Speaking, Impatient, Nice, Cenſorious, Subject to Find Faults in Others, and to Excuſe their Own; Even ſo far, as Oftentimes to Vindicate them, as if they were Vertues; And, Yet, Nothing is more Certain than that there is

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No Vertue without *Self Denial*, and a Contradicting Ones Own Will; without Patience, without Meekneſs, and a Spirit of Humility, and Silence. The Other Token of their Error, is, that they are ſo taken with their own ways; And with the Soothings they are wrapt up In, upon their own Exerciſes of Devotion, that they do not Apply themſelves to the Practice of Chriſtian Vertues; That they Look upon them even as an Hindrance; tho' they are, In Truth, the moſt Solid Fruit of Spiritual Exerciſes; And the very Nerves, and Traces of the moſt Refined, and Abſtracted Life.

It would Require A whole Volumn to Repreſent All the Dangers, to which theſe Deluded Souls are Expos'd; The Fatal Relapſes they have Reaſon to Apprehend; And the Means to Prevent, or to Recover

ver out of them: The Chief of which is to be well Acquainted with the Grounds and Foundation of the Spiritual Life, And to Regulate our Conduct from thoſe Principles: Now, This Life Conſiſts, In Mortification, And the Love of God; That Mortification that does not Kindle this Divine Flame is very Suſpicious; And that Love which does not Introduce Self Denial, In all other things, is Spurious, And does not Deſerve the very Name it Carries with it: He that will Draw Near to Almighty God, muſt not Unmix and Separate theſe Two Ingredients, which are Both the Foundation, And the Top of Perfection: But, Becauſe, The Soul, As the True Image of its Almighty Creator, Is A Free Agent; It is from Thence Subject, In Reſpect to its Spiritual Affairs, to Innumerable Errors and Meſtakes, From The Great Difficulty that there Lies upon

on it to Chooſe, as God, and not as Senſual Man does.

This is the Reaſon that He that will Go Upon Sure Footing, muſt Lay his Foundation Upon Mortification, and Self-Denial: He muſt make it his Chief Work to Die to Himſelf; And Leave to God, who is Faithful in His Promiſes, And the Lord of All Perfection, the Care to Communicate of His Gifts, and Graces to him, at what Time, And After what Manner The Divine Goodneſs ſhall think Fit: And, Its Certain, that Almighty God, Generally Imparts theſe Benefits Chiefly to *Recluſe* and *Mortified Spirits*; But if He does Vouchſafe any Ray of the Divine Light, to thoſe who are not thus Qualified to Receive it, It is to Give them a Taſt, that they may be Enamour'd of the Secret Pleaſures of the Croſs! But, as Several Authors have Treated Upon this Subject, I am Now Upon, I ſhall

ſhall only Speak Here of this Duty of SELF-DENIAL, as a Preparative, to Qualifie and Diſpoſe the Soul to Contemplate The Sufferings of Our Bleſſed Redeemer, So as to Profit, and Advance it ſelf by that Amazing View.

V. This Great and Neceſſary Duty, then, of Mortification, does, Principally, Conſiſt in an Entire and Conſtant Reſignation of Ones Self, And of Every Good that Belongs or has any Relation to us, whether Temporal or Spiritual, Viſible or Inviſible, Into the Hands of God; And that, too, without Any *Voluntary Reſervation* whatſoever: This is an Eaſy Matter to talk of; And may be Conſented to without any Reluctance; But when It comes once to the Tryal, And to be Uſher'd into Practice, we find it very Hard, and Oppoſite to the Almoſt Invincible Impreſſions of Senſual and Corrupt Nature: It is of this War-

Warfare the Holy Apoſtle Treats, *Of The Fleſh Againſt The Spirit*; *And The Spirit Againſt The Fleſh*; The Fleſh would be a Libertine, and take Its Swing; And the Spirit would Bring it into Subjection to Right Reaſon, And to the Will of God: This Victory is the Mark of Our *High Calling*; The Butt, and Scope of all that the Spiritual Man Propoſes to Himſelf, In all the Conflicts of the Battle; All the Lucubrations, and whole Courſe of His moſt Auſtere Devotions: The End of all is, that He may but Become a Pliant Inſtrument in the Hands of God, who never Fails to Enrich a Soul with His Tranſporting Graces, when He finds it thus Happily Diſpoſed: For the more Free the Mind is, The more It is Diſengag'd of Paſſions; Subject, and Given up to God; The more fully Does the Divine Grace Influence, and Operate upon it; And in Proportion to the

The Extract of this Refined Love, Its Reſignation will be Complete and Perfect: So theſe Two, Vertues are Reciprocal; As a Man may Say, They Go Hand in Hand, and Aſſiſt Each Other: Reſignation Amplifies and Augments this Love; Which Completes and Perfects the Other Duty.

This Un-reſerved Reſignation, Therefore, to the Will of Almighty God, Being the Foundation of All Holineſs, and the moſt Effectual Preparation for the *Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt*; It is No Wonder, If Our *Grand Adverſary*, and our Corrupt, Depraved Nature, make uſe of all their Power to Deſtroy it, And If It is Attackt with all ſorts of Temptations: And, For this very Reaſon it is that Almighty God, who knows Our Infirmities, Our Vicious Propenſities and How to Cure them, Has, In his Infinite Wiſdom, Ordained, that the Croſs, and Sufferings ſhould be Planted In Our Way to Heaven: For the

ſenſe of Pain, On the One Side, Drowning a Man's Taſt of Pleaſure, Inſenſably Unties and Looſens Him from the World; And, On the Other Hand, the Experience and Proof of his Own Miſery, ſhews him what a Dependant Creature he is, and Naturally Obliges him to have Recourſe to God: Thus the Croſs, at the ſame Time, Produces theſe two moſt Profitable Effects; It Breaks theſe Chains which Link us to the World, and Haſtens Our Approaches to *The Redeemer of Our Souls.*

VI. Almighty God has Eſtabliſht True Wiſdom in the Croſs! Out of this Path there is nothing to be met With but Wild, and Precipices; He has made the Croſs an Infallable Token of His Friendſhip; That his Deareſt Friends might have the Greateſt Share In It; And make it their Delight whilſt their Eyes are Fixed On His Love: He has Diſpens'd with none of them; No, not Even

Even with thoſe in whom he Found the Greateſt Purity and Innocence; And the Bleſſed Virgin, Her Self, the Pureſt of all Creatures, Was Crucified with the moſt *Piercing Sorrows, even that Went Through Her Own Soul.*

No Man can Imagin, who Has not Experienc'd it, what the Saints Suffer, who ſeem the moſt Repleniſht with the Divine Love; And the Raviſhing Sweetneſs of the Sacred Illapſes and Communications; The Fire of their Charity, Breaks In upon their Hearts, and Becomes to them an Inextinguiſhable Flame, which Preys upon them, and Conſumes the Soul in Proportion to their Love: The Ineffable Charity of the Bleſſed Jeſus Rendred, Even Him, Subject to this Law; And Prevailed With Him to Teſtifie the Exceſs of His Amazing Love by Marking Out the Path, in Which we Ought to Follow Him, with His Precious Blood: For, From the Moment,

He Took Our Nature upon Himſelf, for Our Sakes, as there was No Time, Nor Place, which He thought not Proper to Expreſs His Love, So Neither Could He meet with any, that Was not alſo Fit for Him to Suffer for us! His Mother's Womb; The Tenderneſs of His Infancy; The Budding and Bloom of His Life Were not free from theſe Blaſts; And, It may be Said, that From the Firſt Moment of His Life, 'till the Laſt Struggles of his Diſolution, He was all along Upon the Croſs!

VII. Since this means is ſo Neceſſary, for us, In Order to Attain True Wiſdom, and the moſt Exalted Degree of Seraphick Love; And on the Other Side, that there is Such a Strong Oppoſition and Reluctance in Our Nature, to this moſt Excellent Preparative, Nothing, Certainly, can be more Advantageous to the Soul, to Help it, Carry the Burden of the Croſs; And Reſign Itſelf in all things

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to Almighty God, Than the Continual Remembrance of *The Sufferings of the Bleſſed Jeſus*: For, by this means, We Come to have a True Notion of what Our Bleſſed Redeemer has Undertaken and done for us; How much He Deſerves to be Beloved by us; And, with what Infallible Aſſurances We may Throw Our ſelves Into the Armes of ſo Loving a Father: If His Love for Souls has Carried Him ſo Far as to Sacrafice Himſelf for Our Salvation; Will He Forget any thing, that can add to Our Happineſs, when We Give up Our Selves Entirely, and, Without Reſerve, to Him! This Reſignation, Under all the Circumſtances and Accidents of Life, Yeilds a Peace to the mind, and a Sweet Repoſe that is Unchangeable, and not to be Interrupted; Becauſe, the Scene of the Sufferings of Our Bleſſed Lord; And that Inexpreſſable Love of His, Expreſt, thereby, Being ſet Open to

Our View, Diſpoſes us to Receive from his Hands, the moſt Rugged and ſevere Croſſes that can Befal us! And from Hence there Yet Ariſes Another Inſtance of Our Truſt and Dependance on His Mercy, for all That's Paſt, or Preſent, or to Come; And alſo an Entire Diffidence and Diſtruſt of Our Selves, when We Come to Conſider, that Our Wounds were ſo Deep, that they Requir'd no Leſs than the Sufferings and Death of Chriſt, and the Sacrafice of a God to Cure them: This Tragedy, Repreſented to Our Eyes, will alſo Inſpire us with a Sacred Abhorrence of Our Selves, and of Our Sins, which will be Very Advantageous to us; 'Twill ſhew us Clearly the Abyſs of Our Miſeries, which Endangers us, thro' our Own Weakneſs, to fall Into the moſt Heinous Sins; And Renders us Incapable to Help Our ſelves, or to Riſe again without the Meritorious Aſſiſtances of Our Bleſſed Redeemer's Sufferings. All

All Theſe Conſiderations Kindle an Ardent Flame, In Our Souls, towards the Perſon of *Our Saviour*; But a Flame, Vivid and Efficacious, to Preſs us to a Return, and to Reſemble Him therein; *To Redeem The Time that we Have Loſt*, by *Strange Loves*, and the Defacing of his Image; And to Haſten, without Delay, or any other Place of Reſt, to that *Incenſe*, and *Odour of Perfumes*, the Suffering Jeſus! The Crucified Redeemer! VIII.

The Love of God, and the Deſire to Imitate Him, Produce Another Very Conſiderable Advantage, which we may Look upon as One of the Pillars of a Spiritual Life; which is a Ready Diſpoſition for Vertuous Actions; For, Although the Soul be not always In a Condition to Put them In Practice; Yet, By Vertue of This Love, It has Actually a Taſt of them all; And is Ever Ready to Change Diſpoſition into Practice, whenever

ever any Opportunity Preſents itſelf: It's this, Probably, the Holy Fathers Meant, when they Affirm, that * *All Vertues are Practiſed in Prayer*, which cannot be Underſtood of every Vertue, in Particular, the Subject of which is not Always found in Prayer; But becauſe the Love of God is the Spirit of our Devotions, which produces the ſame Effect, in the Soul, which the Frequent uſe of other Vertues, would do, by Giving it a Readineſs, and Inclination to the Practice of them, which the Doctors call, Habitual Diſpoſition: This made St. *Paul* ſay, That † *Charity Suffereth Long, and is Kind*; That it *Believeth all Things*; *Hopeth all Things*; And *Endureth all Things*; Becauſe it Preſſes us to Do Every Thing that is Accaptable and Well-pleaſing unto God; Or that can Reſtore us to the Perfect Image of the

* Chryſ. L. 2. De Orand. Dec.

† 1 Cor. 13. v. 7.

the *Immaculate* and *Inviſible Creator!*

Mere Human Underſtanding cannot Comprehend what Treaſures of grace flow from theſe three Fountains, which the True Senſe, of The Sufferings of The Bleſſed Jeſus Cauſes to Spring up, and Ariſe Within us; Which are; the Love of Our Bleſſed Saviour; the Imitation of His Vertues; and the Perfect and Entire Reſignation of Our Selves into the hands of God: The Faithful Soul, that it may Perſevere in this Holy Exerciſe, ought to ſit Contented, and be Satisfied with *The Hony from the Rock*, and to Drink full Draughts, of that *Flowing Water* that Iſſues from the Wounds of our *Pierced Saviour*: His Croſs Appears Terrible to the Eyes of *The Children of this World*; But, for all that, It is the *Fountain of Life*;

Life; The *Way of Salvation*; And, the Ladder by whoſe Steps we ſhall Aſcend and Mount to the Higheſt Perfection.

To Contemplate, therefore, with Profit, upon, the Sufferings of Our Bleſſed Saviour, we muſt do it, with an Intention to Enflame our Hearts with the Fire of His Love; to Reſign our Selves up to His Providence, without Reſerve; And, with a Faithful Integrity, to Follow His Example; Ever having Before our Eyes, that, as, in Heaven, * *We ſhall be like to God when We ſhall Behold Him, as He is, in His Glory*; So we ſhall alſo become, like the Bleſſed Jeſus, Here Below, by Looking on him, Often, with the Eyes of Faith, Under the Amazing Terrours of His Crucifixion!

* 1 St. John 3. 2.

† 1 St. John 2. 6. † *He that ſays, He Abideth in Him, Ought, Himſelf, Alſo, to*

to

Walk as He walked: Now, The Bleſſed Jeſus walked, after ſuch a Manner, that he became moſt like to us in our Miſery; we ought, no leſs, therefore, out of Gratitude, and Love, to make it our Chief Buſineſs, to come up as near to Him, as we can, in His Afflictions: For if we look upon Matters of Religion as on the Common Affairs of Life, which we are willing to allow ſome part of our Time, all the other part of it will be Fruitleſs and Un-accountable; And the Omiſſion of Pious Performances will be Deem'd but little Culpable, and a Trifling Loſs; But if we look on them, and Weigh them, as, in Truth they are, Matters of the Greateſt Moment and Importance in the World; As the Great Buſineſs for which God has Given us our Being; And as the Concern of our Eternal

Eternal Happineſs, they will Bringforth in us the Bleſſed Fruits, of Vertue and Holineſs, In the Fear of God, and to the Salvation of our Immortal Souls.

This is what St. *Cyprian* has ſo Excellently Expreſt in ſuch Few Words: * *If you*, Says He, *Are Sufficient for God, Why, then, is not God Sufficient for you!* That is, If you have been the Chief End that the Bleſſed Jeſus Propoſed to Himſelf, And the Cauſe of all his Labours, and his Mortal Life; Is it not Juſt and Reaſonable that he ſhould alſo be, the End and Scope of all your Actions, and the very Source of your Life? Let us Remember that when the Bleſſed Jeſus took our Nature upon Him, the Firſt Motion of His Heart was a Kind Reſignation of Himſelf to His Father's Will; That with the moſt Free and

* Serm. 1. De Aſcen.

Voluntary

Voluntary Submiſſion, He Accepted all that He was to Suffer for Our Salvation; That His Firſt Words were, ¶ According to St. *Lukes* Tradition, * *Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's Buſineſs*; And that the laſt Sentence He Pronounc'd upon the Croſs, when his Bleſſed Soul was juſt Expiring was, † *Father! Into Thy Hands I Commend my Spirit!* Inſomuch that the Conduct of our Bleſſed Saviour was always Uniform and of a Piece; He Began His Life with Ardency for Souls, with Obedience, and Suffering for them; And He Spun the Thread, and Cut it off, after the ſame Manner; And therefore 'tis that his True and Faithful Friends, look upon all that Time, Every Moment of their Lives as Loſt, which they do not Employ, and Sacrifice to his Divine Love, and Imitation.

* St. Luk. 2. 49.

† Ch. 23. 46.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of The Way How to Draw Profit and Advantage from the Reading and Contemplation on The Sufferings of Our Bleſſed Saviour.

IT'S Certain that God Inſpires Good Motives, Pious Thoughts, Divine Light, and Secres, and Inward Impulſes Into his Faithful Servants; By which he Enflames them, and Expands and Opens their Hearts, that he may make them Walk in his ways with the Greater Readineſs and Aſſurance: He Enlightens their Underſtanding with his Divine Truth; He Enflames their Will with his Love, And Teaches them ſometimes

times more in an Inſtant by the Unction of his Holy Spirit, Than all the Maſters, or all the Books, in the World, could do in many Years: But ſtill all this is done Regularly and in Order; And 'tis the Advice of the Miniſtery, that thoſe who Begin this Holy Pilgrimage, And even thoſe who are already Advanc'd, and have made ſome Progreſs, in it, (when this Celeſtial Sun Conceals Its Brightneſs, behind any Cloud) Have Recourſe and Betake Themſelves to Inſtruction, to Reading and Preparation: Theſe Methods will, Generally Speaking, Diſpoſe their Minds to be the more Attentive, and to Reap Advantage, they will Supply their Memory with Good Thoughts, Enliven and Revive the Will, Mollify the Hardneſs and Refreſh the Droughtineſs of the Soul, and Conduct

it,

it with the Greater Faith and Security into the Houſe of Prayer, and the Sacred Paths of Devotion, For Want of which Precaution: Men often fall into a Deſperate Condition of Lazineſs and Indevotion, Becauſe they are Unacquainted with the Right Method, how they Ought to Appear Before the Living God, and to Converſe with him! They Enter upon their Devotions With Uneaſineſs; And Come away and Finiſh Them With Diſguſt, and Leave Off, at Laſt, and Entirely Omitt all the Practice of Religious Duty and Devotion.

II. It is Not Only of Advantage, Therefore, But Very Neceſſary for Thoſe Who Enter Into this Holy Way, to Take a Guide along With Them, who may Preſcribe to, and Direct Them in the Proper ſubjects; And Inſtruct Them in The Manner

ner how they Ought to Behave, and Manage in their Devotions; Or who Knows how to Inſtruct them in this Holy Buſineſs, According to their own *Gifts* and *Talents*; And Lead them in the Way that Will Bring them to their God: For, Although they may all Propoſe the ſame End; Which is to be United, with Love, to God; And to become Like him, by Following his Example, And to Submit Themſelves wholly and Entirely to his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, by the Spirit of Reſignation and Self-Denial; Yet they may Make uſe of a Thouſand Different means to Bring Themſelves to the ſame End: Some make their Way thither, by the Hatred and Abhorrance of them Selves, and their Iniquitys; Others Swim in *Thoſe Rivers of Pleaſure* where they

Find Gods Attractive Preſence; ſome Drive Along in the Stream of the Divine Love, and are Carried on in the Tranſports of that *Quickening Flame*, With the Flowing Tide of Zeal and Impatience to Reach the Shore of that *Everlaſting Spirit*, and *Never Ceaſing Bliſs*: And all theſe Different Road, Lead us Into the Admiration of Gods *Ineffable Majeſty and Glory*, and the *Infinite Treaſures of his Wiſdom.*

He that is ſo happy as to meet with a Prudent and Underſtanding Confeſſour, to Aſſiſt and Direct him In his Religious Affairs, will, in a Little time, make a Conſiderable Progreſs, if he is Sincere and faithful to Obſerve and Follow his Directions. How Evidently does this Appear in Religious Houſes? Where they are ſo Exact and Regular, in Every Step

Step they Take, And the Young Profeſſors and Novices are Train'd up, by Spiritual and Experienced Confeſſors, who are Always at hand to look after them, Preſcribing them their Religious Task for Every day they Live, and Leading them, Step by Step, In the Path which God ſets Open to them, 'Till they Can Walk without a Guide, and Being well Grounded in the habitual Exerciſe of Mortification, and Secret Intercourſe With God, they Become, Truly Spiritual, and Religious Men.

There are many Perſons to be met with, who are Conſiderable for Their Learning, and Eminent for Their Other Natural Qualifications, Among Thoſe Orders where the Cuſtom of Mortification is Neglected; But there is but Little of True Religious Zeal to be Found There: Inſomuch that

thoſe Superiours who take little or no Pains with their Novices, to Train them up, and thoſe Father Confeſſours, who Carry their Directions and Injunctions No Farther, then the External Formality's and Decorum In Religious Duty, are the very Perſons who are the Bane of all Regular Diſcipline, whatſoever: Becauſe, not taking Care to Furniſh thoſe Souls whom God has Committed to their Charge, with that Nouriſhment and Spiritual Food which Only Can Support and Succour the Inner Man, the Whole Order Inſenſably becomes Conſumptive, and Loſes the Power that Only Can Support it, 'Till, at Laſt, it Falls Into a Deplorable Remiſſneſs and Relaxation.

They that Live Open in the World, may Manage their Lives Under a Good and happy Conduct,

duct, By Reading Books of Piety, and Obſerving the Directions of their Proper Father Confeſſour, or any Other Diſcrete and Holy Prieſt of God, to whom they Ought to Open their Conſcience; And Above all, By the Frequent Attendance upon and Reception of the *Moſt Holy Sacrament*, which is the Propereſt and moſt Effectual Means to Obtain the *Light, and Divine Graces of Gods Holy Spirit:* But if any One thinks Fit to make uſe of this Book, for his Aſſiſtance and Direction how to Order his Courſe Towards God, it would be Proper, for him, to Obſerve the Order, and Method that is taken In it.

And Firſt, he Will Find that it Explains, and Lays Open, the Myſtery of Each Particular Inſtance of the Sufferings of Our moſt Bleſſed

Saviour, with a Proper Inſtruction to Create a deſire In the Soul, to Imitate in thoſe Little ſhadows we can, his Divine and Bleſſed Example. In the Next Place, By way of Religious Exerciſe, or Affectionate Contemplation, It ſhews the uſe that might be made, And what Fruit, we Ought to make, and what Practical Inferences to draw from ſuch Amazing Paſſages of the Divine Love: Every One may Apply THEM to his own Heart and Conſcience, when the Lord does not ſpeak to the Heart; For, as ſoon as It ſhall Pleaſe God to give him an Inward call, he Ought duly to Liſten with an Humble ſilence.

Each Chapter Contains three Principal Points: An Humiliation and Abaſement, Proceeding from a ſenſe of Our Own Miſery; An Oblation, and Reſiging up of our

our ſelves Into the hands of God; and an Earneſt deſire to Follow the Example of Our Bleſſed Saviour, and to be Like Unto him; Theſe three Principles, which We Ought Always to have in View, Before Our Eyes, in all Our Actions, and Whatever We Undertake, are Intermixt and Blended, With Extatick Raptures, and Divine Soliloquies, of Seraphick Love! To theſe, are Alſo, added, the Flights, of Adoration, Interceſſions, and Thankſgivings; That Nothing Might be Forgot, which Could Poſſibly Enflame the Heart of Man, with the Love, of thoſe Raviſhing Charms, and Ineffable Bounty and Goodneſs of our dear Redeemer! But, to the End, that the Soul may Act with the Greater Liberty, and may the more Readily Engage Its Love, and Unite it-

ſelf with that *Incomprehenſible Glory*, to which it will be Carried by theſe Divine Contemplations on Its Brightneſs, it has not been Thought fit here, to Confine Its Subjects to any Particular Order or Limitation.

IV. But that the Reader may Yet draw a farther Advantage from this Work, It will be of ſervice to him to Obſerve the Advice following.

I. He that will Live to God, Before all things, in the World, he muſt take Great care to find out that Particular Paſſion that is moſt Predominant within him, and thoſe Failings to which he is moſt Subject; that he may Encounter them by Prayer, and the Practice of the Contrary Vertues: But Above all, Let him Inceſſantly Implore the Love of God, and the Spirit of Humility; for, theſe Two Vertues Purify

Purify the Soul from Every thing that is Diſpleaſing Unto God.

II. Let Him Apply Himſelf to the Knowledge, and Performance of the Buſineſs of his Proper Calling; And Believe that God does Abſolutely Require that of Him; And that he ſhould here lay the Foundation and Ground-Work of all his Devotion and Religious Duties: For, As the * Father ſays, *The Offerings of Supererogation do not at all, Pleaſe God, when we do not Diſcharge our Selves of thoſe Duties and Obligations which lie upon us.* Now, He calls the Obligations, or Duties of our Calling, that which the Law of God Requires of every Man in his Proper Circumſtances and Condition; Whether it be that of a Religious, or Eccleſiaſtick, or a Magiſtrate, or a Judge, or one that is Married, or the Father of a Family, &c. And whenever they have any Scruple upon their Minds, Touching any

* St. Ber. Serm. Ecce nos Reliquimus Omnia.

any of theſe Relations, let them conſult ſome Underſtanding Perſon, that Lives in the Fear of God, who will not Flatter them, nor Prevaricate to ſooth or pleaſe them, But, without any other View, But the Service and Glory of God, And the Salvation of thoſe who Apply to them, ſet them to Rights in the Matter.

III. After he has ſet his Conſcience at Eaſe, by a General Confeſſion, and Diſcharg'd all Suitable and Relative Obligations; Let him, Then, Rectifie His Projects and Worldly Deſigns, and Quadrate his Affairs, by the Rules and Dictates of Religion, as the Chief End which he Ought to Propoſe in all his Actions, and Intentions Whatſoever. Now this is One of the Stupendous Operations of the Divine Grace and Infinite Wiſdom, that Every Circumſtance and Condition of Our Lawful Calling, Let it be what it will, that

that is, which is not Cenſur'd by the Laws of God, is Conſonant with the End of which We Speak; and Our Own Experience ſhews us, Every Day we Live, that the Buſineſs of Our Proper Calling, which takes up ſo much of Our time, Altho' it may ſometimes Appear to whith-draw us from Our Selves, yet it Rather Brings us Nearer to God then Separates us from him, it Rather Increaſes Our Deſires After him; And, after ſuch a manner Communicates Him to the Soul, by Secret and Unknown Ways, Amidſt the Diſtractions and Incumbrances of Our Vocations, that it Never Retards Our advances towards Him.

Let Him In Every thing he Undertakes, ſeek the Righteouſneſs and the Glory of God therein, and not Only Content Himſelf in Avoiding the Actual Perpetration of Sin, But Bear forwards towards a More Perfect IV.

Perfect State in the Course of his Particular Vocation: Let Him Compare his own Desire with those of the Blessed Jesus, on the like Occasion: Which he may easily do, by Examining into *His Doctrine and Example*; This will be a sure and Happy means to Carry him a great way towards this Divine Pattern, and Consequently to Improve him in the Works of Sanctity and Devotion.

V. Let all his Actions be Unisons, and Correspondent to each other, after such a manner, that no Part of his Time may become Exceptionable; But every Hour may be Devoted to its Proper Business: By this means he will be sure to live in a Round of Action that shall be Innocent and Blameless; And be the less Expos'd to the Temptation of Sin and Satan: Let him not Enter upon any Action, nor put his Finger to any Work, without First lifting up his Heart to God, to Implore his Direction and

and *Enlightning Grace* that he may do nothing but what ſhall Prove to Gods Glory, and according to his good Pleaſure.

Let him Receive every thing that Befalls him, whether Vexatious or Agreeable, with an Entire Conformity and Reſignation to the Divine Will, Inceſſantly Praiſing God and Bleſſing his Holy Name, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition and Repugnances of Human Nature: Let him Beſeech the Divine Goodneſs to Enable him to Overcome the falſe Dictates of Natural Corruption, and not to be Overcome by his own Human Frailty; But to Foſter and Improve thoſe good Deſires, which, of his Infinite Goodneſs and Bounty, he has Inſpir'd into him; and let him take Great Care to keep his Temper Even and Compoſed, as much as poſſibly He can, that all thoſe Storms and Rufflers that are Apt to Riſe within, may Entirely Settle VI.

Settle into an Uninterrupted Scene of Calm and Quiet.

VII. When He Receives any Particular Inſtances of God's Grace, let him not be Vain Glorious to Boaſt of them, or make any ſhew of them, only to him who has the Charge and Care of his Soul upon him; and to whom he ought, without Reſerve, to open every Secret of his Soul, in order that he may avoid Errors and Miſtakes; and not fall into the Snares and Temptations of the Devil.

VIII. There are many different Sorts of Temptations: Some Directly Lead us into Sin; And Others turn us aſide from the True and Perfect Way. This is a Good Precaution, In General, In Reſpect to all of 'em.

In the firſt Place, to Suſpect and Diſtruſt our Hearts, in Reſpect to thoſe things towards which we find our Inclinations ſtrong, how ſeemingly

ingly Good ſoever they may Appear: For, Excepting God alone, and where our Views lie any other Way, whatever 'tis that Draws the Bent and Bias of our Souls, Either Into a Vigorous Purſuit or Painful Reſignation of it, The Affections Grow Criminal, and Eccentrick; And They Become The Spring from whence Temptations do Ariſe; And prove and Obſtacle in our Way to That Perfect Knowledge and Pure Love of God, which Ought to be the Scope, the Ultimate End and Aim of all our Wiſhes and Deſires.

Next. To Entertain No Thought whatſoever, That Will Sit Uneaſy upon The Conſcience: But to Oppoſe It, In Its firſt Beginings, By Imploring the Gracious aid and Aſſiſtance of Almighty God. If the Temptation Grows forcible, and Its Addreſſes too Vigorous and Importunate; The Beſt Way is Immediately to have Recourſe to ſome Spiri-

Spiritual Father; To Frequent the moſt Holy Sacrament; to implore the *Interceſſion The Bleſſed Virgin*, and the Hierarchy and Communion of Saints Above; And Particularly to Flie all Opportunitys which Lead Into the Snare, and would Breed *That Worm within us that Dieth Not:* For By a Preſumptuous Encounter, In theſe Strifes, it often Happens that the moſt Vertuous may be Vanquiſht, and Give Way; Whereas the Weakeſt and moſt Fraile Diſpoſition, By Its Flight and Shunning the Attaque, often Finds Strength and Victory: The *Temptations of the Fleſh*, and *The Pride of Life*, are the moſt Dangerous and Fatal of 'em all; Becauſe theſe Strike Directly upon the Very Life of the Soul itſelf; But a Man Ought to Reſt Aſſured, that they do not Always Envenom, where the Will and Diſpoſition do not Give in, Unto them, ſo Long as the Heart is not Entirely Aban-

Abandoned and Taken off from God; ſo as to Give over all thought and Expectation of his Succour and Aſſiſtance, and Supinely Yield to Temptation, and then to Ceaſe all Exerciſes of Piety and duty.

Therefore, far from Avoiding the Phyſician, or his Preſcription, when a Perſon finds himſelf Under any of theſe Spiritual Diſtemper, Let him take Notice that this is the very Time when he Ought in a moſt Particular Manner to Betake Himſelf to, and Caſt Himſelf at the Feet of Our Lord and Saviour, that Great Phyſician of our Souls, With a Strong, a Stedfaſt Truſt and Aſſurance, that he will, not only, of His Great Bounty and Goodneſs, Help and Relieve us; But that his Infinite Wiſdom and Love Will Diſpoſe him

to Turn all our Struggles and Afflictions to our Advantage.

Now all this that has been Said Concerning the Regulating ones Life; The Purity of our Desires, and the Resistance of Temptation, Must be of Great use and Comfort to those Persons, who have Given Themselves up to Prayer, by Qualifying them with that Strength of Faith and Confidence In God, by which they Ought to Approach His Goodness, and Establishing that Serene Peace and Composedness within them, which is so Necesary to fit them for His Divine Conversation: I say, this must be of Great Comfort and Advantage; That when a Man finds Himself so Smitten with Remorse, upon the Inward sense and Conviction of any New Transgression that he has Committed, that He Knows not how, He is afraid

to

to Appear Before God Under a Juſt ſhame and Confuſion for what He has done, Yet He muſt not even then, Abandon his Maker, But with confuſion of Face Preſent Himſelf Before His Mercy-Seat; Acknowledge the Greatneſs of His Guilt, and Declare, in the Humility of his Soul, Before God, that he Knows no Other Way, after he has Offended the Infinite Juſtice, But to have Recourſe to That very God, whom He has ſo Unworthily Offended; For, That which Otherwiſe would ſeem to be a Reſpectful Deference, and Fear, is, In Effect, a Secret Pride, which cannot Bear the ſhame and Humiliation of Repentance and Confuſion Before God.

Let him not Reckon or Depend Either upon his own Merits, Or Induſtry, for the Accompliſhment of his Reſolution; But Only be IX.

faithful In doing what lies upon him, In Order to Prepare and Qualify himſelf for what it ſhall Pleaſe God to Diſpenſe and Impart to him, and let him not think he makes but little Progreſs, If he Faithfully Perſeveres Under this Diſpoſition, in Renewing and Reiterating Good Deſires Day by Day; Let him Aſſure Himſelf, that the Work of the Lord will be Accompliſh'd, after that Manner as will be moſt Agreeable to the Divine Glory, and the Good of his own Soul: But let him not Pretend to make any Judgement of his Own Progreſs, or the Divine Communications, which, Almighty God, Out of his Infinite Wiſdom, Oftentimes Conceals from us, Even at the ſame Time that he has Granted Our Requeſts: For it is the Divine Will and Pleaſure, that We ſhould

ſhould Live in a State of Hope and Reſignation, that We ſhould Never ceaſe to *Knock at the Gate of Mercy*; And have, Always, a ſenſe of Our Indigence and Miſeries Before Our Eyes.

Let him never Omit the Bleſſed Duty of Prayer, Let his Inſenſibility of Its Succeſs be never ſo diſheartning to him: But, On the Other Hand, let him Strive and Labour to Perſevere Conſtantly Therein: For to Be without Taſting is not to be Without Fruit; And that will be Profitable to him, Altho' He is not Always Senſible of it: But when it Pleaſes God to Touch the Heart with a ſenſe of his Love, We muſt be very Attentive of Its Operation; And not carry Our thoughts any Other Way, Even when he Lodges but a Single Spark of this Celeſtial Fire within us; For this X.

Single Spark will, Probably, Kindle a Mighty Flame, which will Produce that Change, in the Soul, that it Desires.

XI. Let him Often Lift up His Soul to God, During Its Pilgrimage; Resigning Himself Entirely to his Goodness, Blessing his Holy Name, Giving Thanks for the Divine and Providential Graces; Imploring the Assistance of God; Addressing him with all the Softness of the Soul, Embracing The Heavenly Image, with Transports, Languishing and Sighing After the Enjoyment of him, and, in a Word, Ever Cherishing the Flame of this Divine Love: For it, Often, Comes to Pass, that God Grants, In these Moments, that, Which he Defers Even in the Time of Our Devotions, and most Importunate Addresses of Him; To teach us that It is to His Goodness,

neſs, and not to any Care of Ours, that We Owe our Happineſs; Which may alſo Serve to Encreaſe Our Love Towards him, and to Abate Our Pride.

Let him Throughly Perſwade Himſelf of theſe two things: The One, which will be a Great Comfort to him Under all Afflictions and Temptations, that God Always Adequates and Proportions them to our Strength, and Never Lays, upon us, a Greater Burthen, than We are Able, by the Aſſiſtance of his Divine Grace, to Undergo; For, as a moſt Wiſe and Sacred Hermit has Obſerv'd: XII.

* *Although We Perceive and Feel the Temptation, With the Grace, Yet It is moſt Certain, That Grace does Evermore Precede the Other, Since God Never Suffers any One to be Tempted, But According to the Meaſure of his* Grace; A Con-

* S. Iſaac Lib. De Relig.

 ſideration,

ſideration, which Ought to Inſpirit us with An Invincible Courage and Dependance. The Second thing is, to Call to Mind Gods *Omnipotent Preſence*; And Eſpecially Vnder Every Circumſtance of Diſtraction, and When The Soul is Wandering From Its Center; Then We ought, as much as 'Tis Poſſible to have a Particular Regard to God; To Conſider How His Eyes are Upon Us; And, how he Actuates within Us; By which Means, the *Door Of His Communication* will not be ſhut Againſt us; And We ſhall Always be In A Condition to be Introduc'd Into his Preſence, Whenever It ſhall Pleaſe the Lord to Call us Into the

* Cant. 2. * *Cellar of His Moſt Delicious Wines*: Where he Pours Forth the Torrents of his Love, Where he will Diſpel thoſe Clouds that now

now Interpoſe, and Keep him from Our Eyes; Where he will Familiarly Communicate Himſelf to the Soul; Where, Far from Human Expreſſion and Where All Nature muſt be Silent, he Himſelf will Intermix, and Speak Interchangeably with the Soul; Where he will Repoſe, and Slumber in Eternal Peace With Us; O who ſhall be Able to Suſtain this happy Moment! Lord Vouchſafe us this Bleſſing, if it be for Thy Glory and the Advancement of thy Service!

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the Manner, how to Apply The Sufferings of Our Bleſſed, Saviour, In Prayer and Devotion.

1. WHoſoever would Apply Himſelf to this Holy Exerciſe, Ought, when the Hour of Prayer is Come, with an Eye of Faith, to Conſider How God is Preſent in the moſt Secret Receſs of His Heart; And more Intimate to the Soul, than the Soul is to Itſelf; He Ought Therefore to Look upwards upon God, and Below upon Himſelf, as a Miſerable Creature, Proſtrate, at the Feet, of his Creator: One may alſo Conſider Himſelf, as a Fiſh in the Sea, Immerſt

merſt in the Immenſity of God, or Encompaſs'd, on Every Side, with His Graces, as a Man Would be, by the Rayes of the Sun, In Its Meridian, and in the Open Air: Out of theſe Idea's Let him make Choice of that which Will Impreſs upon Him the moſt Reſpect, Attention, Faith, Confidence, and Union with God; And Let him Reſt Aſſured, that God, in his Mercy, Will Vouchſafe a Favourable Ear Unto him, And Supply his Wants; Let him *Then* Fix his Thoughts upon The Myſterious Work, Objected to his Contemplation: But Let him not Meditate upon It as A Thing that's paſt and Over, But as if it were Actually Before his Eyes; Since It is, In Effect, So In The Mind of God: And, Altho' The Actual Operation of This *Incomprehenſible Myſtery* has been Completed, yet The Efficacy and Vertue of It is Still In Force; And The Same *Ineffable* Love of *The*

Bleſſed

Bleſſed Jeſus, which Induced Him to That *Almighty Operation*, Prevails ſtill towards The Salvation of Mankind: For This Love of His, Is Infinite, Unchangeable, Ever the Same; As Ardent ſtill as it was at That very Time, when He *Sacrific'd His Precious Blood*, and *His Life*, *for our Redemption and Salvation*; And He is ſtill as Ready to become The *Repeated Victim to His Father's Juſtice*, were there a Neceſſity that It ſhould be ſo, as He was Before.

II. Thus, after he has Recollected, And Rightly Diſpoſed all his Inner and Exteriour Faculties; Adored God with a moſt Profund Reſpect; *Made the Sign of the Croſs*; Repeated The Lords Prayer; And The Angels Salutation to The Bleſſed Virgin, In Order to the Reception of The *Divine Illumination*; Let Him Enter upon this Exerciſe, and with Great Attention, Read over *The Sufferings of our Bleſſed Saviour*; In which

which, Every Chriſtian Ought to Employ his Meditation. Whilſt he is Reading, Let Him Stop at Thoſe Paſſages, where He ſhall perceive His Soul Senſibly Touch'd and Affected, to Liſten what God will ſay to Him upon This Subject; And to Let Him Act his Divine Will; And, then let Him Go on and Read farther. When He has Gone through a Chapter, Let Him Betake himſelf to Chriſt, as If He Actually Beheld Him, Before his Eyes, In that very Inſt. ıce of His Suffering, which he Makes the Subject of His Contemplation; There let Him Open his Soul, And Make Profeſſion of his Love to Him, In the moſt Tender and Engaging Expreſſions, Or By The Secret Whiſpers, and Inward Motions of his Heart; According as Almighty God ſhall Inſpire Him, For we muſt Always, follow thoſe Impreſſions which He Vouchſafes us, with a faithful

a faithful Integrity; And, Since It is The *Holy Jesus* whom we Search After, fix our Reſt In Him, when we have Once Found him.

Let The Underſtanding Act as Little as It Can; For, Beſides that *That* has but a Weak and Glimmering Light, whilſt The Soul is Impriſon'd In this Mortal Body, It Ought to be Made Uſe of to No Other Purpoſe, But to Prepare The Ways for The Will, And, as one may Say, *to Open The Gate of Holy Love*: But, If It ſhall Pleaſe God of his Infinite Mercy, by The Aſſiſtance of The Underſtanding and Imagination, to Refreſh and fill our Souls with the Sweet Illapſes of An Inward Peace; or the Admiration of Thoſe Truths which A Lively Faith Reveals within us; Or with a Lively ſenſe of Sorrow, at the Proſpect of our Sins, and *The Sufferings of our Crucified Saviour*, on Account of Them; Or, with A

Regret

Regret for having, ſo Late, Begun the Return of our Love to Him; Or with a Deſire to Give up Our Selves Entirely to Him; Or, with a Tranſport of Love which Carries us to his Preſence to take Him Into our Arms, and Tenderly to Embrace Him; Or, In a Word, with Any Other Impulſe, or Motion what ever, that Unites us to Almighty God, There We muſt Lodge Our Heart; And Reſt In Peace *Therein*; Without Engaging our Thoughts with Any Other Object, How Sacred ſoever It may Appear to be: Not That Other Thoughts muſt Neceſſarily be Evil; But Becauſe The Soul finds, In This Inward Peace, The Bleſſed Fruit, And The Utmoſt End of *All Divine and Seraphick Contemplation.*

The Soul of Man is too Narrowly Confin'd, In This Its Earthly Priſon, to Reflect on many Objects at The Same Time: It is Very Wrong

Wrong to Sow, where We ſhould Reap: And a Miſtake, to pretend to Accumulate and Repleniſh Ones Self even with the moſt Holy Idea's, when we Ought to be Gathering the Fruit of them; Let the Soul, therefore, Enjoy the Fruit of its Paſt Labours; Let it Repoſe, Like a Sheep that's fed, which, without putting itſelf to any farther Pains to Search about for freſh Paſture, which perhaps it could not Digeſt, Lies Down and Chews the Cud, Regales the Palate a Second time with what it has already fed upon: The Happy Day Will Come, When, *being Delivered from The Burden of This Fleſh*, The Soul will find Itſelf Repleniſht Equally with Knowledge, and with Love; Without The One being an Empechement or Hindrance to The Other!

III. The Time of Prayer being Ended, Return from your Devotions with a Diſpoſition of Peace and Love,

Love, as One who has the God of Both within Him; And then Apply Your Self to the Buſineſs of Your Vocation with a ſteddy Mind; And Endeavour to Preſerve the Warmth, the Light, and Peace of Your Devotions, But if they have been Accompany'd with Barrenneſs and want of a Produce of Zeal, with Diſquiet, or any Diſturbance upon the Mind, let it not diſmay, or make you ſad; But when you Leave off, Bleſs Almighty God, who is Always Juſt in his Judgments, Acknowledge your own Unworthineſs; Offer up Your Grievances to him; declaring that you have not Preſumed upon this Undertaking, with a View to Pleaſe your ſelf, *Even with the Divine Refreſhment*, But, out of an Humble Submiſſion and Obedience to the Divine will, to which you Reſign

your ſelf without Reſerve: In a Word, Examine your ſelf, what might have Occaſioned theſe diſtractions in you; And, if they have Proceeded from any *Fault* or *Negligence* of your own, Before or at the Time of your Devotions, be ſure to Become Evidence againſt your ſelf, in this Caſe, Accuſing your ſelf Before God; And as it were, by way of Pennance, ſay Over a Set of Collects Suitable to the Occaſion, by way of Satisfaction: And, by this Means, it will Come to Paſs, that tho' you Left the Sacred Offices, Under Confuſion and Abaſement, you ſhall draw no Leſs, Good Fruit, from Thence, than if you had been Fill'd with thoſe Comforts that Uſually Attend them. Almighty God, who is More Careful for Our Spiritual Improvements, than We Our ſelves,

ſelves, Knows Alſo, much Better than we can Poſſibly do, what is moſt Fitting and Convenient for us: We therefore Ought, In Every Act and Inſtance of our Devotions, to Reſign our ſelves Entirely Into his Hands; And to carry, with us, a Sincere deſire to ſerve Him; Not, According to Our own Humour, But his Good Pleaſure, Equally Rendring him Thanks and Adoration, Both Under his *Afflicting Hand*, and when he Stretches Forth his Arm to *Comfort* and *Relieve us*; Since Both Diſpenſations Equally Proceed from A FATHER who is full of *Tenderneſs*, And *Mercy* to us.

But that the Soul may be the more Compoſed, and, By Conſequence, in a Better Diſpoſition to Converſe with God; It's very Neceſſary and Important to Pre- IV.

ſent him with the Morning, The *Firſt-fruits* of Our Thoughts; And Lift up our Hearts to him, whenever we Riſe, To Point out Certain and Particular Times and Hours in Each Day, and devote them to the duties of Addreſs to Our God, in Frequent Aſpiration and Breathings after him, and, to fall a ſleep, at Night, at his Feet, and in his Preſence: For it is very difficult for him, who, Allows his Mind a Looſe, to wander after other Objects, to be Compos'd and Recollect, in his Devotions, But, as this Purity and *Simplicity of Heart*, is, alſo a Neceſſary Qualification for the Divine Illapſes; And, that a moſt ſtrict and Impartial Seruting Into our Failings, does very much Contribute Towards it, I will, Here, Preſcribe a Method, how we Ought to do it, Every Day we Live.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The Method of Our Self-Examination, Every Day, Before we Go to Our Devotions.

THERE Are Certain, Important Maxims, in a Spiritual Life, which he that Would make any Progreſs therein, Ought to Obſerve in his Conduct: Some, of them, are General and are to be Obſerv'd at all times, in all Places, and by all Perſons: Others are Particular, and Annex'd to Certain Circumſtances. The general are theſe. 1. To be Continually Upon Our Guard that we be Not Voluntarily taken up With any Object, any Deſire, or thought which may be Diſpleaſing to Almighty God. 2. To think, Often, of his Preſence, to adore and 1.

Bleſs him with the moſt Profound Reſpect. 3. To Commit no Fault Either of Body, or from the Soul, Without Repenting of it from the very Hour of the Tranſgreſſion; And Betaking Our ſelves Immediately to God for Pardon and Forgiveneſs. 4. Never to Enter upon any Reſolutions, 'till we have Conſulted God About them; That We may do Nothing but what is Conformable to his Will. 5. To Be Watchful in ſubduing Our ſenſual Appetites, Particularly as to the Bridling our Tongues, That No Unſavoury, or fatal Diſcourſes may Eſcape Them. 6. To do to our Neighbour, Let Him be who He will, All The Good We Can; And to open and Enlarge Our Hearts, towards His Service, after Such a manner, that we Rather want the Power than the Will, to Aſſiſt Him. 7. To Bear No Ha- Hatred nor Bitterneſs of Malice, tho'

Never

Never ſo Small, No, not ſo much as for a Moment. 8. Never to Let Any Guilt Hang upon The Conſcience, Eſpecially If It be of Any Moment; Without Bewailing It, and Having Immediate Recourſe to Sacred Pennance. 9. Neither to be Deficient In The Works of Piety, Nor Neglect The Secret Impulſes of The Holy Ghoſt; But faithfully to follow The Motions of His Bleſſed Spirit. 10. To Diſtruſt Ourſelves In Every Thing, towards which we feel our Inclinations Strong, whether It be Good or Evil; And to Have The Fear of God, Always, Before our Eyes. 11. Not to be too Obſtinate and Self-Willed; But to Give Place to That of Others, when Ever It may be Done without Offence to God. 12. To Entertain No Great Eſteem of Ones Self; And to do Nothing whereby to *Gain The vain Applauſes of Men*; To have No Other Aim,

In All we do, but GOD'S GLORY; Not to Prefer ones Self to Any Body, tho' He Appears Never so Imperfect. 13. To Bless Almighty God under Every *Incident of This Life*; And to Receive, whatever Comes from *His Hand*, with *Thanksgiving*.

II. Besides these General Rules, there are, Also, Particular Ones, which Relate. 1. To the Duties of Each Person, According to his Condition. 2. To the Amendment of his Common Failings. 3. To the Regard he Ought to have to the Opportunities Which may Help him Forward or Prevent him in the Progress and Advancement of his Spiritual Affairs. 4. To the Regulating of his Action, and the time that Gods Providence has allow'd him. 5. To the Manner of Acting and Conversing With His Neighbour: For He that is Resolv'd to Walk According to the Will

and

and Pleaſure of Almighty God, muſt, Always, have, In his View, the Progreſſion in his Love; The Shunning of Sin, the Advantage of Whatever may Befal Him, and the Change, the Renewing, the Increaſe, Or Dimination of His Reſolutions, According to the Circumſtances that Preſent themſelves Unto Him. For, as it is very Well Obſerv'd in the Book of *The Contempt of the World*, *We Advance According to Our Reſolutions*. It is Neceſſary, therefore, that We ſhould Neglect Nothing in ſo Important an Affaire; And to Examine Our Selves moſt Strictly upon all theſe Heads.

III. Let Him, then, who Would Acquire this Grace, of *Purity of Heart*, after he has Recogniz'd the Croſs, and ſaid the Lord's Prayer, Preſent Himſelf, Before God, Like *the Prodigal Son*, Who Returns to his Father; Or, Like *the Publican*, Who

Who Dared not Presume so much as to Lift up his Eyes to Heaven; Or, as the *Penitent* Magdalene, *Who Lamented Her Sins At Our Saviour's Feet*, Or, Like *the Leper*, Who from Afar Beseech'd Him for a Cure; Or, as *that Wicked Servant Who Fell Down Before his Master; And, Having Not Wherewithal to Satisfie Him for what He Ow'd, Had Recourse to his Patience and his Bounty*; Or, in a Word, Like a Miserable and Wretched Creature, Who Loaded with the Weight of his Sins, has Need of the Mercy and Compassion of his Creator: After this Let Him Make a Sincere Confession of all his Sins in Particular; And Beg Pardon, for them, With Sorrow and Humility: Let him Confront his Faults with his Resolutions; And Magnifie the Glory of *that Patient God*, Who has Born so Long With him; And, at Last, Conclude his Self-

Self-Examination, With this Collect or ſome Other Like it.

Behold Here, O my Lord, and my God, This Unhappy Creature! Behold him, whom thou Daily doſt Support, with ſo much Goodneſs; And For whom thou haſt done Such Mighty Works: This Unprofitable Servant, ſo Frail, ſo Ungrateful, Such A Rebel to thy Grace, ſo Unfaithful In Thy Service; Who has done ſo much Evil, and ſo Little Good! what Will Become of me, O Lord! Shouldſt thou not have Pity and Compaſſion On me! Thou, without Whom, I am Nothing; I know Nothing; Am Capable of Nothing, but to Commit Iniquity, and Am not Able to Correct or to Reform my Self; Nothing but Relapſs and fall Into Deſtruction, without the Power, Ever to Ariſe Again; To Go Aſtray and Not Retrieve my Soul; To Loſe thee my God, and Never to Seek After thee; To Offend thy Purity, and Never to Attone thy Juſtice, Or Appeaſe thy Wrath; If I be not Aſſiſted by IV.

thy

thy Light and Grace: Thou Knowest, that Every thing that's Good within me whether it be to Will, Desire, Or Act thy Pleasure, It All Proceeds from thy Strength and Goodness! Thou Art the Refuge of the Poor and Helpless, and the Relief and Succour of the Distressed! Behold, Here, A Poor and Wretched Sinner, who Throws Himself into the Arms of thy Mercy! Look on me, O Lord, With the Eyes of thy Goodness! O Do thou Forget my Sins! Take Compassion of my Miseries! And Bedew the Drought, Mollify the Hardness of my Heart with the Sovereign Waters of thy Grace! O Light Divine! Dispel my Darkness! O Infinite Power! Strengthen thou, my Weakness! Accept O Lord, the Pantings of my Soul! Assist my Will! O Put Out of thy Mind All the Trespasses and Sins that I have Committed Against thy Goodness! And Vouchsafe to Grant me, All that thy Precious Blood, and the Sacrifice of thy

thy Life have Purchas'd for me Such as I Am, I would Be thine! Let my Unworthineſs be Counter-Ballanc'd by thy Merits and thy Love! And Grant, that the Same Goodneſs, which Inſpires me with A Deſire and Reſolution to Serve thee, may Prevaile With thee, to Work In my Soul All that thou Deſireſt of me, that I may Never Act but Unto thy Glory, Amen.

After He has Thus Opened his Soul to God, *Let Him Implore The Aſſiſtance of The Bleſſed Virgin,* Of His Guardian-Anel, And His Patron-Spirits; And make And End of All with a Deſire of Being Faithful to Almighty God, And of Keeping his Reſolutions; But when It Pleaſes Almighty God, by a Ray of His Enlightning Grace, to Communicate, *That Great Purity* to the Soul, which He Requires of It, He Gives it Alſo a more Clear Notion of Its Defects; He Preſſes It to Examine them more Strictly; And to Dive v.

Dive Into Its most Secret Inclinations, not only such as are Vicious, But Degenerate and Natural! Would to God! That Sinful Men Would Lament The most Heinous of Their Offences; With The same Degree of Contrition as such a Soul, Thus Reformed, Bewails and Grieves for Its most *Venial Sins!* As It Inhabits a Region of Light, It is Not for The Assistance of so Divine a Spirit That I write This Treatise, But Only for such as are but just stept Out of The *Broad, Destructive Way,* Into This Strait and Narrow Path that Leadeth unto Life.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Some Seaſonable and Proper Motives to Inflame Our Hearts with The Love of The Suffering Jeſus.

AMongſt An Infinite Number of Motives, Sufficient to Kindle, In Our Hearts, The Love of Our Bleſſed Saviour, from The Conſideration of his Sufferings; And to make us ſenſible of the Obligations that Lie upon us to follow his Example; We'll ſet Down Here Some Few, of Them; Hoping that It will pleaſe God to Suggeſt Others to Thoſe, who ſhall Come, As The Holy Prophet has it, to * *Draw Them Plentifully Out of Thoſe Wells of Our Saviour.* * Iſa. 12. 3.

He

He Underwent all VOLUNTARILY, and Purely Out of the Love He had for us; Without Being, any Ways, Oblig'd to it, Either in Strictneſs of Juſtice, or by Reaſon of Our Merits; For, we Were all Sinners, On the Hand; And, on the Other, Although he had Brought Himſelf Under an, Engagement, to Suffer for us, Both by his Promiſe and Subminiſſion to God, His Father's, Will, Both The One, And the Other, Being Voluntarily Undertaken, His Sacrifice was not ſo Much * An Oblation of Juſtice, as A Love-Offering.

* Pſ. 40. 7, 8.

II. He Suffer'd, Alſo, with Joy; For, Altho' Holy Scripture Compairs his Torments to The Waves of an Angry Sea, He Thirſted with An Ardent Deſire to Undergo Them; And it was Under This Idea, That, the Prophet Foretold

told, of Him, * That *He ſhould be Filled Full with Reproach.* This is a moſt Bitter Food; And very Hard to Digeſt; But it was ſo Pallatable to The *Holy Jeſus*, That He Requir'd a Large Meaſure of it to Aſſwage his Hunger: That Eager Appetite of His Which Balanc'd to his Sufferings, Ought Alſo to Become the Meaſure of Our Love. * Lam. 3. 30.

III. This Ardent Deſire, of His, to Suffer for us, Being the Reſult of his Divine Charity, Sweeten'd the moſt Severe and Rigorous Aſſaults that Were Made Upon Him: It was, Therefore, Pleaſing to Him, to Live ſo many Years, Under an Entire Subjection, to his Parents; To Live, and Converſe Among a Set of Men; Whoſe Manners and Diſpoſition were ſo Different from his Own; To Suſtain the Attacks and Temptations of the Devil; And To Submit Himſelf to many Other Mortifying

fying and Grievous Pains, of which we are to Speak at Large; And In which His Love, to Souls made Him Find Ineredible Delight and Satisfaction.

IV. He Wrought, In Himself, One Continual Miracle, That he might Qualify Himself for *That Great Work of Our Redemption*: For, Seeing God, Essentially, and, By Consequence, *Enjoying the Beatifick Vision*, He Refused, those Glorious Qualities, to his Body, of *The Divine Brightness*, *Energy*, Most *Refined Substance*, *and Impassibility*, Which Ought Naturally to have been Communicated to it; And this Heavenly Love, of his which made Him, so Often, to Work Miracles, to Take away the sense of their Torments from *His Martyrs*; Made him also to Work *This*, to Render Nimself Capable *to Suffer*, and *to Die* for us.

He

He has Transfer'd Unto us, and made Over an *Entire Donation* of all the *Meritorious Works* of his Paſſion: Being Always, Happy In Himſelf, He Wanted no Merits but for his Exteriour Glory, which he Miraculouſly Suſpended, as we ſhall ſhew, and Prevented Its Outward Luſtre and Glory! Therefore he Purchas'd all the Reſt for us, *viz.* Pardon and Satisfaction, for Sin, And Grace, and Glory: But theſe he has Redeemed us Unto, And Obtained for us In ſuch a Plentiful and High Degree; That, Although One Single Sigh, of his, was Sufficient to have Paid THE PRICE, and Procured to All Mankind *The Means*, and Even the *Enjoyment of Eternal Life*, by the Ineſtimable Value, Which the Dignity of his Perſon Gave to the Leaſt of his Actions; V.

V. He was Willing, that he Might Satisfie his Love, to Undergo the moſt Cruel Torments; And this is what has made THAT SUPER-ABUNDANCE of REDEMPTION, And that *Inexhauſtible Treaſure of Divine Graces*, which he is Evermore Diſpenſing, to us, with the Same Bounty, as if he were ſtill Expiring on the Croſs!

VI. His Love had never a Beginning; And it will never have an End: For, Although he made his Appearance, in Time, By thoſe Miraculous Works, which were the External and Viſible Effects of the *Divine Energy*; Yet the *Celeſtial* Flame, from all Eternity, was ſtill Alive, and *Burning* within Himſelf; For as God is In His Divine Attributes, *Infinite* and *Eternal*, He is Alſo, *Immutable* and *Incapable of Change*, Our Bleſſed

Bleſſed Redeemer therefore, Loves us with all his Eſſences with the ſame Love which Unites Together the *Three Divine Perſons, in the Godhead:* As There is not any Thing, in God, but One, Undivided Eſſence; There Could be Nothing Elſe, In him, but One Undiſtinguiſh'd Love: And Therefore, the Same Love which he Bears to the very Deity Itſelf, Flames, and is Continually Burning, in him, Towards his Creatures, Every One, In Proportion, and According to his Deſerts; And he has not Done Leſs for me, Than he would have Done for Himſelf, Had he been Under the ſame Neceſſity; The ſame Fatal Condition to which I am Reduced.

VII. This Love of the Bleſſed Jeſus, is Neither Divided, nor Capable

of Diviſion: Almighty God, Regards me with the ſame Tenderneſs and Charity, as he does all the Reſt of my Fellow Creatures; He has Suffer'd no Leſs, upon my Single Account, than for them ALL; And he is as Much, MY GOD, MY SAVIOUR, and REDEEMER; As he is of ALL the WORLD Put Together: Inſomuch that I may ſay, With the Holy Father, St. *Bernard*, *Thou Art All Entirely Mine, O Amiable Jeſus! And Thou waſt Entirely Sacrificed for My Wants!* With the Holy Apoſtle I may Call him, *My Lord, and My God!* As if There were not any Other Soul, in the Wotld, but Mine, for which he Gave his Life: And Although he Communicates himſelf to Mankind According to the Meaſure and Quality of thoſe Diſpo-

Diſpoſitions, which he Finds in them, Becauſe he will not Offer Violence to the Freedom of their Rational Nature; Yet it is very Certain, that of his Own Good Will, He is Always Ready to do as much Good, to Every Particular Soul, as he has done to his Moſt Holy Virgin-Mother: For, as * St. *Chryſoſtom* has Obſerved, *It is Always his Own Fault who Receives but Little of what He Asks of God:* It Cannot be Doubted but that the Goodneſs of God is Infinite; ſo that, the ſmall Return, we meet with, from Our Prayers, does not Proceed from the Deficiency of God's Good-will, But from the Unfitneſs of Our Diſpoſition: If God Grants but a ſhort Bleſſing to his Creature, It is not Becauſe his Love is but Indifferent Towards

* Hom. 20. in Matt.

him, But Becauſe the Object is Unprepared, and Loves Little: When the Bleſſed Jeſus Labour'd in his Agonies, upon the Croſs, I was then Preſent to his Knowledge, which is not Leſs Infinite than his Love; And he made Oblation, of his Sufferings, to his Eternal Father, for all my Particular Wants, and Neceſities, as if he had Underwent His Bitter Paſſion Only for My ſake.

VIII. That he Might Become More Like to me, He has had no Regard for Himſelf: He Conceal'd All his Ineffable, Reſplendent Brightneſs, and the Majeſty of his Divine Perſon, that he Might be Capable of Subjecting Himſelf to all Thoſe Abaſements and Humiliations that he could go Through, without Sin: He Paſt for a Sinner; And was Treated

as

as a Slave, and Valued not his own Life, Although that Life was more Precious than all the World, But ſo far as it might be of ſervice to my Salvation; He Permitted his Soul, which Was Happy, and Incapable of Dying, to be Violently Torn out of his Body which had been, Always, in A Perfect Submiſſion to it; And with which it Naturally Deſired to Remain United: And As to his Divinity, which was Impaſſible, and, of Itſelf, Could not Suffer, That Alſo Concurr'd, at Leaſt, After a Particular manner, with all his Mighty Labours and the Miracle of Sufferings he Underwent: In a Word, This God of Love Was not Contented, 'Till his Body and His Bleſſed Soul, And the Divinity Itſelf, Became My Food, My Very Sacramental

mental Nourishment, And Support: And he has done so Much for me, In Every Capacity, as Wretched as I am, that he has Given me all he had to Give; And Suffer'd All, for my Sake, that he Could Suffer.

IX. Some of his Afflictions have been of such, a Violent Degree, that he never Could have Gone thro' them without Costing him his Life, had he not had THE GOD, within him, to Support him, such Were his Fasting Fourty Days in the Desart; His Terrours, In the Garden of Olives, which St. *Luke* calls AN AGONY, which, In Effect, was a Mortal Accident: But Because it was not *The Fullness of Time* for him Yet to Die: Or In the Course of Providence that he should Destroy Himself, he Supported his Huma-

Humanity By his Divine Omnipotence, that he Might Suffer More than the Weakneſs of Human Nature Could Grapple with or Suſtain: And, In *His Paſſion On The Croſs*, he Treated His Precious Body After the ſame Manner: For Altho' ſuch Violent Torments muſt Naturally have Depriv'd him of His Life; Yet, by the Almighty Power of his Godhead, he Preſerv'd it ſtill, Even 'Till he had Fulfill'd the Meaſure of thoſe *Piercing Pains* which he had *Agreed* to Undergo *For Our Redemption.* Thus, At the ſame time he Caſt the Cloud Over the Brightneſs of his Divinity, that he Might not be Sparing In his Sufferings; And Quickened his Anguiſh, that he Might Aggravate his LOAD of SORROWS for Our ſakes.

But,

X. But, to Conclude, that which Infinitely Exalts the Greatneſs of his Love, As the Apoſtle has
* Rom. 5. 8. Obſerv'd, is the * *Unworthineſs of Thoſe for whoſe Sakes He Underwent All Theſe Bitter Pains and Sorrows*: It is not, Perhaps, Above the Reach of Human
† Rom. 5. 7. Comprehenſion that † *One Might Lay Down His Life for A Good Man*; For that, He, who by an Unjuſt Sentence, Suffers Death for One who is Innocent, Inhances his Own Merit, by that Means, and Exalts his Own Glory; ſo far is he From Loſing any thing, Upon this Account, Either One Way or Other; But to die for A *Wicked Wretch*, A *Criminal*, *An Ungrateful Miſcreant*, who is *Eternally* Provoking his very Friend, and Benefactor, and Makes uſe of the very Favours

Favours he Receives at his hands, to his Diſhonour, this is what Surpaſſes all human Conception, and Underſtanding, and what Nothing but *The Love of Our Redeemer* Could Poſſibly be able to Comprehend and to Perform: For *Whilſt we Were Enemies to God, The Eternal Father, Gave up His Only Begotten Son to Die For us*, The Son of God, Fulfill'd what Was † *Written, of Him, In the Volume of the Book,* and OFFERING up, HIMSELF, With Joy: And God THE HOLY GHOST, this Celeſtial Fire, Kindled the Flame of this Ineffable, Unconceivable Charity in the *Everliving Father and Son Uncreate*, By which, we Poor Sinful, Mortals, are ſtill Beloved, Notwithſtanding all Our Unworthineſs and Demerits.

† Pſ. 40. 7.

merits. The Merciful God does not Quadrate his Love, to us, by the Rule of our Deſerts, But According to the Riches and Meaſure of his own Bounty and Goodneſs: And the more Unworthy we are, The Greater, and more *Pure* and *Worthy* is His Love, and the more *Endearing to us.* It is thy Great Concern, O Chriſtian Soul! To Conſider, How much Thou Oweſt to *This Compaſſionate God, And Saviour*, For All Theſe Mercies, The Great Purchase Of Thee.

THE

THE SUFFERINGS OF Our Lord JESUS CHRIST, in the Obscure part of his LIFE.

CHAP. I.

The first Instance of his Sufferings In the Foresight and Undertaking of All that He was to Endure.

OUR Blessed Saviour *made Himself a Servant*, to Restore Human Nature (tainted and Corrupt through the Transgression of our first Parents) by Remedies so Efficacious and Adapt to the Healing of our Wounds, that it may be truly said, He has Restored us to a more *Excellent* and *Perfect* State. I.

For beſides that we are Born and Live in Sin, and are, from thence, Obnoxious to all thoſe Miſeries juſtly due to our Offences; ſuch is the Infection thereof, that it has Radicated in our Nature, ſo Deprav'd a Diſpoſition, and ſo forcible a Propenſity to Evil, that we had no leſs Neceſſity, for a SAVIOUR to *Re-inſtate* our Nature in its Priſtine frame and Harmony, than to Expiate, and Atone God, for our Tranſgreſſions; And we were Equally in Want of a *Reformation* as a *Redemption*.

For this it was, that the *Son of God*, having, of his Infinite Mercy, Given himſelf up a Voluntary Sacrifice for the Redemption of the World, was not content to Purchaſe a Cure for us of all the Maladies Inherent to us, by the various Actions of his Life; But he has ſet before us an Example, and a Pattern of all Vertue, which ought to Influence and Guide us in the Government of our Manners: This is what has been urged by St. *Paul*, that as We are Born and Live in Sin, as we have * *Born the Image of the Earthy* (Adam,) *we muſt alſo Bear the Image of the Heavenly*, by a Life entirely new; Eſpecially ſince that We are become one and the SAME BODY with him, by the Grace of God, in the Sacrament of Baptiſm: The ſame Bleſſed Apoſtle alſo Cautions us to † *Put on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; And to Live as Thoſe who have been *Redeemed with his Blood*, and Inſtructed by his Example.

* 1 Cor. 15. 49.

† Rom. 13. 14.

II. The Bleſſed Jeſus who is, in every Reſpect, our Saviour, and our Head, has obſerved the ſame Method in the Re-eſtabliſhment of Mankind which They had followed in their own Deſtruction: For He actually Practiſed all good Works,

Works, the Reverse of those Iniquities which have been our Ruin: To which Purpose, in the first place: As Eve, our first Parent, had been the Mother of all the Evil that was Brought upon us, through her Fall, therefore, in her Place, He made choice of the Blessed Virgin, (who was endow'd with the most Angelick Purity of Soul and Body, Perfectly Devoted to God,) for his Mother and the Companion of his Labours in this World, to become the Instrument and Example of all Good to us.

In the next Place, As the first *Adam* was Created with Great Advantages in Nature, and the most Plenteous Assistance of the Divine Grace, Insomuch that he might, from thence, with Ease and Pleasure have preserved Himself in that Happy State, yet He Fell almost as soon as He was Created; So The Second *Adam*, to Repair the Transgression of the First, Willed that his own Natural Body, should be formed, and that his Soul and his Divine Nature should be united, In an Instant; Being Impatient to Waite the Natural and usual Terme of Conception, and the formation of Mankind, that he might Begin the Great Work of our Redemption.

Again, As Disobedience to the Positive Command of God was the first Sin; So the first Act of our Blessed Saviour, In Relation to Mankind, was an Act of Obedience. One Act of a Perverse Will, and One Pleasure, tasted against the Prohibition of God the Creator, was the Original Occasion of our Lost Condition; And the Suffering of one Affliction, undergone with Resignation to the Will of God, was the Original means of our Redemption; Insomuch that III.

Our Blessed Saviour, Descending from above, Vnited himself to our Nature; and at the Instant of his Conception, in which he might truly have been Adored as GOD-MAN, He Began his first Undertaking for us; And the first Article of our Cure! He would not Bear the least Delay; Neither was there one single Moment of his Life that was not full of the Instances of Mercy, for us *Sinners and our Salvation!* The Eternal Father had set before him, from the first Moment of his Life, All the Labours, Sorrows, Reproaches; How God would forsake him, The Torments, the Death, And, In a Word, All the Sufferings that He had to undergo, with all the Dismal Circumstances, the Weight, Number and the Measure of 'em; And that in a manner so much to the Life, and so Express, as if he had been Actually under the Passion of 'em: On the other hand, the Blessed Jesus who was, in himself, *All-Knowing* and *full of Grace and Light*; from whom nothing could be hid; who Beheld all these things, as if Actually Present, Resigned himself, with Joy and without Reserve, to the Will of his Father; And Accepted All that God had Ordained him to Suffer, from his Conception to his Death,

III. with a Resignation so Free and Entire as if All had been proposed to him for his own Glory and Delight.

IV. But as by all these Sufferings of his Life, however harsh they were, and Contrary to Nature, He Accomplisht Every Particular of his Father's Will; We ought also to Believe, that He did not Content himself to accept, in General, All that he was to Suffer, for our Sakes; But that He has, from that time, in a manner, Given up

and Exposed his Sacred Head to Thorns; His Eyes to Tears; His Cheeks to Buffetings; His Face to Affronts, and His Lips to Vinegar and Gall: That he Offered up his Body, his Life, his Honour and All that He had to him, Capable of Suffering, for the Glory of his Father and the Salvation of Mankind. That was one Exquisite and Sensible Pain to his Humanity, which was then so Nice and Tender to Grapple with it; For, as our Blessed Lord had never spared himself, In any thing which might, in the least, Occasion him any Grief or Trouble; Doubtless These Sad Ideas must needs have been very Sensible to him, Because his Eternal Prescience Supplyed what was wanting to his Experience; And altho' his Sense of them was afterwards very Outwardly apparent, In that Prayer of his, in the Garden; One may Venture to say, that it was not more Strong and Forcible upon him, at that time, than in those first Moments of which we have been Speaking.

V. This Voluntary Submission of the INCARNATE WORD, was Attended with a most Profound Humility, a most Ardent Love; a most Severe Affliction, and An unbounded Merit which was so acceptable to God, that it Sufficed for the Redemption of all Mankind, And *Prevailed with the Eternal Father*, from that time, to Revoke his Sentence, And the Command He had given to his Son, to *Exalt Him Into the Throne of Heaven* and Set him on his own Right Hand: For the Merit of this one Action, of our Blessed Saviour, was Sufficient to Wash away the Sins of the whole World; to Obliterate and Wipe them out; to Chain down the Infernal Powers, to Fill the Universe with the Treasures of Gods

Grace; Able to Open the *Gates of Paradise* to all Believers: Because the Merits of our Blessed Saviour, being both Divine and Infinite, as the value of every work is Computed from the Merit of the Person from whom it Proceeds, The least of his Sufferings was more than Sufficient to Redeem A thousand Worlds.

This is what the Prophet *Isaiah* has foretold of him, in these Words *Behold the Name* which He will have him called by; *Haste ye to take away the Spoils and to Carry off the Booty* * For *before the Child shall have knowledge to Cry my Father, and my Mother, the Power of Damascus shall be Destroy'd.* This was Spoken of the Power of the Devil, and of Sin, with which the World was Enslaved: The Prophet foresaw that the Messias would not Delay our Redemption, so much as for a Moment; and that He would be so Impatient to Accomplish the Designs of his Father, that from the first Instant of his Life, he would by his Obedience most abundantly merit for us all the Treasures of the Divine Mercy, not only before he could speak but even before he was Born! Such was the Immense Love which brought down the Blessed Jesus upon the Earth. One single Instance of whose Sufferings, for us, were Enough to plead for our Salvation! But it was not Sufficient to Express his Love for us! Behold what a *Redeemer* is come to Save us! What a *Lord* what a *Friend* have we, that has Done all this For us!

* Isa. 8. 4.

V.

VI. What more Profitable Instruction, then, can we Desire, for the Reformation of our Lives, and Manners! what more Comfortable, what more Advantagious than This, which our most Blessed Guide has given us from the first Original

nal

ral of his Life: 'Tis the Default of our Obedience, as the Holy Scripture says, that has been the Chief Cause of all our Miseries: And this Vertue being Effectious in Christ, as the Foundation of all those Graces he has purchas'd for us, By this, he would Convince us, how we ought, like him, that is BY OUR OBEDIENCE to the Commands of God, to Establish the whole Building of the Christian Faith and Doctrine; And as he would not suffer a single moment of his Life to pass him without An Entire Submission to God his Father, so ought we also to Account as lost, every Article of ours, which we do not Consecrate to his Service: Let us Consider then how much of our Precious time we lose, even in the Requisites of Nature, such as Repose and Sustenance, besides Idleness and Sloth, and what is yet more to be Lamented, how many days of our Lives are lost while we Prostitute our selves, Body and Soul, to Criminal and Sinful Actions, and all those other Execrable Courses which separate the Soul from God! With what Weakness and Indifference do we Regard him! With what Easiness and Facility do we forsake his Service! With what Negligence and Unconcern do we depart from him! And Wander out of the Path that Leads to our own Salvation, which has cost him such a Price! If we do but Compare the Coldness and Indifferency of our Souls, on this Account, and the Trifles which take up our minds and Engage our whole affections to prevent us in the Love of our Redeemer, with the Fervency of his Zeal to Suffer for us, and the Rigorous and Severe Anguish He has Voluntarily Endured for the Satisfying Gods Justice for our Transgressions, We should surely, without Partiality, throw

ourselves at his Mercy Seat, with our Faces Covered in Confusion, and with Hearts Contrite and pierced, with the Sense and Acknowledgment of our own Ingratitude against the Infinite and Divine Love!

VII. So much hath been already written upon this Subject of Obedience and Submission to Gods Will, that I shall Satisfy my Self in this place to say only this, that our Blessed Saviour In this Sacred Form he has left us for our Instruction in the Duty of Prayer, has Equally given us a Copy for Our Obedience, as well as an Instruction for our Supplications, In that Part of it where we are Taught to Say * *Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.* For the Saints in Heaven not only desire and do the Will of God, In those their Blessed Mansions above; But they cannot so much as Conceive a Thought In Opposition to Gods Appointment; And So, in Imitation of them, We ought not to Content our Selves to Quadrate our Wills, Ever, in Conformity to the Divine Pleasure, But we must Aspire to that Perfection of Obedience as to Submit our very Thoughts to his Determination.

* Mat. 6. 10.

The World is full of Maxims, Established, and as it were, Consecrated under such Specious Pretences, of Honour, Obligation, and Duty, as would almost seem to justify the Practice of 'em, tho' they are directly Contrary to the Law of God! And from the Degeneracy of our Hearts, we are Prone to Receive These as so many Motives for a Dispensation to our Obedience under the Pretence of Gods Glory, and his Service, which makes it Easy for a Man to Impose upon his own Soul, unless he puts himself very much upon his Guard. Let us Beseech God therefore with holy

David

Pſ. 119. 37.

Divine Contemplation

Upon Our Bleſſed Saviour his Fore-ſight and Undertaking of all He was to Suffer.

O Son of the Living God! O my Saviour and my Redeemer! O Thou who art the Relief of all my Miſeries, and the only Remedy of all my Woes! Thou art Come into the World to ſave our Loſt Souls! To ſhew Us how Stupendious thy Love is to Miſerable Sinners, and the Longing deſire Thou haſt to Attone God for them! Thou art Parched with a Thirſt ſo violent for Torments, and the Croſs, that thou wouldſt not live one moment without Suffering! I.

Deem this Body of thine too little to be without a Blessed Soul; to Animate it; and The Divinity to be United to it. Thou hast always found it Large enough to Suffer, Even to such a Degree, as from the moment of its Formation to Feel, at once, all the Torments It was, at Different times, to undergo thro' the whole Course of Life! Thou didst, even then, Discover to it the time when it should be Labouring In Tears, and Anguish, and Hunger, Inconveniences, and Poverty, and Hardship, and Injuries, and Contempt of Men! The Cords with which it should be bound, and Dragg'd about; The Stripes with which it should be Mangled; The Thorns with which it should be Pierced; The Cross on which it should be Nailed; The Gall and Vinegar which it was to Taste; The Dismal and abandon'd State to which it should be Reduced; And Last of all the Cruel Bitter Death, by which THAT PERFECT SACRIFICE should be Compleated. If

II.

III

What the Age of Three and Thirty Years that Single Thought of those Torments, which were Prepared for thy Sacred Humanity to Endure; Could it ſuch a Degree of Sadneſs that it brought upon it that Agony and ſuch a Bath of Bloody Sweat? How great was its Anguiſh, Then, when being juſt about to Enter into the World, All the Sufferings it was to Undergo, even thro' the whole Courſe of its Life, were ſet before Thee, in a Light ſo Clear, ſo Lively, and ſo Certain, as they then were! I Conceive, O my God! That this was one of the greateſt Inſtances of thy Suffering, that Ever Thou haſt Laboured under! whilſt in Reſpect to thy Humanity thou didſt Feel the Torments under the moſt Exquiſite Senſation, and, as God Omniſcient, They were all preſent to! Thee At that very time thou didſt Foreſee all the Terrors of thy Paſſion, Thou didſt Accept theſe hard Conditions, and wert ſenſible of their Force; For, thy Love to Souls would not Suffer Thee to Flinch, or Spare thy Self In the Leaſt Article of thy Labours! O Thou Divine Love! That art for ever Active! What Inceſſant, what Divine Artifice do'ſt thou make uſe of! What Expedients Do'ſt thou Contrive, to Win our Souls! There was neither Place, nor Time, nor Years which thou haſt not thought proper for the Performance of the Myſterious Deſigns of thy Love! And when Time and Place have put Thee out of a Condition of *Outward* Sufferings, Then thou didſt take care to provide thy Self Internal Croſſes and Agony, that thou mighteſt Continually ſhower down upon us, and Inſpire us with, the Treaſures of thy Divine Graces, by keeping up the Fire with which thou wert,

thy

II. thy Self Confessed; And to make us Sensible of the Greatness of thy Flame to Those Thou lovest, and how Thou would'st Reward Those

III. Miserable Creature that I am! When I consider this Impatience to Suffer for my Salvation, In an Age so Tender, and in a Body yet Incapable of the Human Imperfections; What can I say Or How shall I prostrate my Spirit, Most Blessed Redeemer, in thy Presence! For Alas! Every Moment of my Life, when I look upon my Self, I see full Nothing There but Sin! And there seems to be no Part of me but what is Infected, As there has been No Part of Thee which has not been pierced with Grief, and Anguish! From my Mother's Womb, tho' I was Incapable of Action there, I was Tainted with an Original Corruption, from our first Parent, with which my Soul was Sullied and Defaced! At my first coming into the World, before I had a Capacity to Transgress, tho' I had not the use of Natural Reason, I was yet Subject, by forcible Appetite, to Irregular Passion, to Falsehood, to Pride, to Gluttony, to Disobedience, and to many other Exorbitances, which too much Expressed the Corruption of my Heart! And when I came to the Years of Discretion, and to be Capable of knowing Thee, O my God! Instead of bringing forth Those Fruits, which Thy Divine Goodness might Expect from me, into what Excesses did I not Run! O Thou Infinite mercy! Who hast Born with me to this Hour! O Do not Destroy me! But forgive those Violent Passions, which have hurried me on to follow the Precipitate Biass of my Corruptions! Whether they be of Vanity, or Falsehood, or of Presumption, or Evil thoughts, of Criminal Lusts, or shame-

ful

ful Actions! I have Lived in an Entire Forgetfulness of Thee, I have been Insensible of thy Bounty, Oppositte and Rebellious against thy Divine Light; Deaf to thy Inward Calls and Inspirations; Disobedient to thy Laws; Enamour'd of the World; Disgusted and Tasteless of Eternal Joys; Wedded to my Self; Alienated from my God; Full of self Love; But Empty of the Love of my Dear Saviour! I found Time too short to Satisfy my Soul with Pleasures; And the World too Narrow to Confine my Desires; But great Enough and Weighty in the Ballance, when I poised my Soul whether I should prefer that to Thee, or Lose Thee for ever for the sake of that! Every Period of my Life seem'd strong Enough to Offend my God, but too Weak to serve him! Thro' Wilful Appetite I committed Sins In Idea, before my Years and Strength enabled me actually to transgress in them, Being always Powerful in Concupiscence But Ever Languishing and Lukewarm in the Service of my Suffering Redeemer.

But Thou, O my God! who art the True Friend of my Soul, and touch'd with Compassion for it! Thou wouldst not Wait the Time, Thy self, which Nature Employ's in the Formation of our Body; Thine was Fashion'd in an Instant, Animate and fill'd with Divine Majesty, thro' the Desire thou hadst to Improve every Article of that Time, and to Give up, to that Ineffable Work of Love and Charity, the time which Nature requires for the Production of Mankind. And as for me, O Thou Infinite Goodness! Altho' I had not the use of Reason, for many Years after I was Born, Yet Even then, when I came to it, I have not Sought to be Acquainted with, and to know IV.

know, Thine, my Lord! And tho', in every Stage of my Life, I beheld thy Bleſſings heaped upon me; Yet have I not Conſumed my ſelf to Search after Thee, my Benefactor! I have never Become thy Servant! I have had no Pains, no Throbbs of Love towards Thee! But have Lull'd my ſelf up in a Languiſhing, unactive Faith, or to ſpeak better, *A Faith that's Dead!* I was Preſent to thy Thoughts when thou Didſt Enter upon that Sorrowful Conſern of Suffering for my Soul! Thou kneweſt me when Thou didſt Accept the Terms of thoſe Great and Heavy Pains; And thy foreknowledge of my Miſeries Excited thine Impatience to Begin the Cure! Take Pity on me, O Lord! Turn me, and Bring me Home to Thee, that I may Begin, at Leaſt Now, to Love Thee, and to Obey Thee! Help me that I may, in Bitterneſs, Deplore the Folly's and Exorbitance of my Life Paſt, and ſo Innovate my Soul, and Create ſuch a Change, and Tranſformation of it, into Thy ſelf, that I may Breath after nothing More than Thee, my Living God!

V. O That my Soul Had Never Offended Thee! O that it had Imploy'd every Moment of its Being In Thy Love and Service! If, from the firſt Moment of my Return to Thee, with my whole Soul, I had my ſelf ſo Affected, and Changed, ſo Different from what I was, How happy had it been, O my God! Had I never been Sepirated from Thee! I ſhould have been at this Time thy Faithful Servant! Repleniſh'd with Thy Love! Tranſform'd Into the Image of thy Bleſſed Spirit! O Infinite Patience who haſt waited for me ſo long! O Endleſs Bounty whoſe Patience has Endured the Tranſgreſſions of a Sinful Mortal, even until now! O Inexhauſtible

Love

Love who loving first unto Thee ! O Take Poſ-
ſeſſion of me ! and Govern and Incircle Nature
Lovingly unto Thyſelf ! Drown, That Love to the
laſt Drop of my Life ! Devote my Life entirely,
to Thee, to Dwell with Thee for ever ! It is a
moſt Senſible Affliction to me that ever I Offend-
ed Thee, my God ! See, O Lord ! Behold me
at thy Feet ! Satiate thy Juſtice ! And Draw out
of me all that Atonement Thou thinkeſt fit ! I
only Earneſtly Intreat Thee that thy Love
which has ſo ſtrongly moved Thee to Suffer for
me, may Cauſe a Stream of Tears Continually
to flow from my Heart, that I may Weep out
the Reſt of my Life, and Bewayle the Unhappi-
neſs of ever having Diſpleaſed Thee ! This is
the Work of Thy Love And to this I Abandon
all my Intereſts and Concerns ! Let this be the
Umpire of all my Wants, for I ask nothing of
Thee, But what This will ask for me.

VI. Was it not fit that thou ſhouldſt paſs the Beginnings of Thy Advent into the World, with the Bleſſed Virgin, whom thou didſt find *Accompliſhed with Grace*, and Love, and Purity, which made her ſo Acceptable to Thy Perfect Goodneſs that *Thou didſt not abhor the Virgins Womb!* But didſt vouchſafe to Become her Son ! *It was thy Gracious Deſire that I ſhould ſucceed in that Miracle!* And from thence thou didſt take my Sins, and the Cure of my Soul upon Thy ſelf ! O moſt Divine Shepherd, who art come into the World to * *Seek and to Save* Not the juſt, For *They are All gone out of the way.* † *There is None that doth Good, no not one.* But for Us Sinners and for our *Salvation!* Thou didſt Appear Out of Thy Amazing Love, For that Poor Wandering Flock that is Bewildred and Gone Aſtray ! Yet the Bleſſed

* St. Luke 19. 10.
† Pſ. 14. 3.

Virgin

[illegible] Lord and King, [illegible] by the [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

and a Compleat Deliverance from all Evils! Thou haſt, at firſt, heaped Bleſſings upon me; And, upon thy coming into the World, Thou haſt Begun THE MIGHTY WORK after ſuch a manner that had it Even ſtopt here I had been more than Sufficiently Purchas'd! Wherefore, then, O my God! Did not That which was Sufficient for my Salvation Suffice alſo in the Ballance of Thy Love! O Thou God of Love! He that is not Enamoured of thy Divine Grace, that Does not Love Thee, He never knew Thee! He never has Conſidered what Thou haſt Done for him!

One cannot be Tyred of that which is his True Delight: That's his Wiſh; And He Loves, He Covets its Duration: Thus the Plentiful Communication of thine own Graces, and Raviſhing Charms of thine own Nature, which makes Thee Happy in thy ſelf, would not Let Thee Return to Heaven, thy Dwelling Place, nor Content thy ſelf with Thy Firſt Sufferings, which could not but Sharpen thy Hunger after the Work of our Redemption, which thou waſt Reſolved to aſſwage, If I may ſo preſume to Expreſs my ſelf, even at the Expence of a Continued Life of Suffering for Three and Thirty Years; And then, to finiſh it, undergo that Shameful and Bitter Death upon the Croſs! O what Tenderneſs of Love was This! O Immenſe, Infinite, Ineffable Love! In which every Tongue muſt be Silent, and all Knowledge at a Stand, and Wrapt up in Profound Admiration and Aſtoniſhment! Diffuſe thy ſelf thro' my whole Soul, O Sacred Love! O melt this Ice within me! Mollify and Soften this Obdurate Heart, That thou mayſt never meet, there,

with any more Oppoſition against thy Divine Illapſes and Impreſſions! Enflame, Expand, and fortify my Heart, and Let my Love to Thee be alſo Infinite and without Meaſure, For there is no other way in which I can anſwer Thee according to thy Love! what ſhall I ſay, O Thou Divine Affection! I Conſecrate, there Devote my Life to Thee! My Soul! My Strength, and Every Faculty thereof, and All my whole Being! Accept me O Lord, and Diſpoſe of me and all that I have, in the World according to thy Will! And ſuffer not what is of me Ever to Depart from Thee! I can fix my Eyes on nothing but only upon Thee! Give me alſo a Deſire to be for ever with Thee! As Thou haſt had to ſuffer for me on Purpoſe that I may Love Thee always, and Deſire Nothing ſo much as to be an Object of Thy Love!

O Sacred Mother of God! Moſt Chaſt and Pure Virgin! who haſt been the Inſtrument of theſe Divine Graces! Give ſome Inſtances, for me, of thy Love, to that Suffering Saviour, who has done ſo much for my Soul! And ſince you know Beſt, The Greatneſs of my Obligations, Ask, for Me, the Pardon of all my Paſt Tranſgreſſions! And the Grace to Serve this Heavenly Lord, with Faithfulneſs and Integrity, for the Time to come! O Celeſtial Hoſt! Yee Bleſſed Inhabitants of the Upper World, Who are the Trophies of this God, made Man, for the Love for Mankind! Bleſs him, Adore him, and Pay him An Oblation of Love on my Account! Inſpire my Soul for Ever, O yee Miniſtring Spirits! with that Heavenly Fire In which you your ſelves are always Circled and Enflam'd, to Raiſe your Spiritual Songs and Heighten your Hoſannah's to the Glory of the Lamb. *Amen.*

THE

THE Second Instance OF THE SUFFERINGS OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

CHAP. II.

In The Nine Months which He Past In the Womb of his Blessed Mother.

SINCE The Son of God was So Intent upon Searching Out The means to Suffer for Our Sins; We Ought Not to let the Least Circumstance of what he has Done for us Escape Our Notice; And that we may keep them in an Everlasting Remembrance, We should Impress them I.

Deep upon Our Minds: His Love, for us, put him upon the Contrivance of a New kind of Affliction, which, Considering his Divinity, He Himself alone was Capable of Undergoing, Namely of Confining Himself, for the Space of Nine Months, within the Limits of his Mothers Womb: He Rejected Every thing that might any ways Asswage or Mitigate the Sharpness of his Sufferings, But would lose Nothing of the least force to Heighten or Augment them: So far Was He from Receiving any Assistance from that Part of Himself, which was The Divine Nature, after he had So Miraculously Superseded all the Sweetness which His Blessed Soul would Naturally have Diffused over his Senses, by virtue of the Hypostatick Union, Or the taking the Manhood into God, that the Humanity thereby Suffered but the more: The Blessed Virgin, Her Self, altho' She Was a Real Paradise of Delight unto Him, from the perfect Purity of her natural Disposition, could In No Wise lessen, In Him, the Sensation of his Corporeal Afflictions; For the Pleasures which He found from Her had No Relation to the Senses, but Consisted only and Entirely In the Satisfaction which our Saviour Imparted to this Blessed Saint, and In that Mutual Affection which United the Son with his ever Virgin Mother; But this was In a Manner, Most Pure, and Entirely Spiritual. For Her Qualification, as Mother of God, did not Exempt the Blessed Virgin from the State and Condition of Human Nature, And tho' her Gravitation, which was by the overshadowing of The Holy Ghost, was free from Many Infirmities Common to others of her Sex; She

was

was Subject to all Such, as were Compatible with her Virgin Purity, and moſt ſingular Devotion.

The Son of God, then, having Willed to make Himſelf like to The Children of *Adam*, took upon Him all Our Miſeries, Sin Only Excepted; And He had No Reſerve In Reſpect to his Humanity, which could In the Leaſt, Alleviate the Inconveniencies of This his Confinement. As His moſt Holy Conception was the Work of God, and Not of Man, It was Accompliſh'd In an Inſtant; And his Body was formed by the Operation of his Spirit (which was the Holy Ghoſt) which is All that Human Nature Requires to Perform the Functions of Life; Only In So Great Perfection, that It Could not be more Excellent or Complete: His Divine Soul, which was United, In the Same Inſtant, to his Body, Was So fill'd with Grace and Wiſdom, that It Not Only Surpaſſed Every Creature, Whether Man or Angel, But it was Even Worthy to be United to the Deity, and to Become a moſt fit Inſtrument for the Operation of thoſe Miracles which God had Purpoſed to Work for the Salvation of Mankind. Thus The Bleſſed Jeſus Was, from hence, poſſeſs'd with that Plenitude of Grace and Wiſdom, to Such a High Degree, that there could be No Addition made to it by Age or Time; And He had No leſs a ſhare of it In his Mothers Womb, than afterwards when He Aſcended Into Heaven, and Sat Down at the Right Hand of His Father: For to Increaſe in Wiſdom had been to Acquire Some Degree, Some Step which He had not Before; And Such a Defect was Inconſiſtent with the II.

Dignity of His Person. Certainly Would but any One of Us Conſider Seriouſly, With What a Reluctancy he would Enter again Into his Mothers Womb, with the Same Reaſon and Knowlege that he has Now; And how much more freely He would Undergo any Other Sort of Pain; We might, In Some Meaſure, Imagin What it was The Holy Jeſus Underwent, During thoſe Nine Months of his Confinement, In The Womb, Who was Infinitely more Accompliſh'd In the Rational Faculty, And Light of Knowlege, than the whole Race of Mankind put together.

* St. John 3. 3. It Startled *Nicodemus* when Our Saviour told Him that * *A Man muſt Abſolutely be Born again, to be Saved.* For, As He took this Speech In a Vulgar and Literal Senſe, This Seem'd moſt aſtoniſhing and dreadful to him, And Even Impoſſible, that a Man, Endow'd with Reaſon and already In Years, ſhould Return Into the Belly of his Mother to be Born Again, a Second Time. From Hence 'tis, likewiſe, that St. *Auſtin* In the Hymn He Sang to St. *Ambroſe* on His Baptiſmal Day, makes uſe of this Powerful Expreſſion, by way of Soliloquy to Chriſt, Saying; 'O Lord *when Thou hadſt taken upon Thee* 'to Deliver Man, *Thou didſt Not abhor the Virgins* 'Womb. Now, the Word Abhorrence, Expreſſes Diſtance and Separation, accompany'd with Reluctance and Indignation. But, Notwithſtanding That, The Bleſſed Jeſus had Nothing that could Diſſwade Him from Incloſing Himſelf within This ſo Strait and Incommodious A Priſon; He Bore the Inconvenience with the Same Good Will, and the Same Patience, as all the Other Troubles of his Life; And He

Continu'd

Continu'd there, 'tis Believ'd, as many Months as *Adam* paſſed Hours in the Delightful Entertainments of the Terreſtrial Paradiſe: He would by No Means, Retrench thoſe Fourty Days, During which Time, The Embryo has not yet Either Soul or Life; But He Anticipated this State of Inſenſibility, even In this Article of his Conception, againſt the Common Courſe of Nature, that He might the Sooner Begin the Work of his Attonement for us.

As *Job* Never Gave So Great a Token of his Love to God, as at that time, when from the Utmoſt Height of Human Proſperity he was Reduc'd to Live upon a Dunghill; So The Son of God, who Could not Bear that Any One ſhould Exceed Him In his Love for us, In a Moſt Eſpecial Manner, witneſſed How Great His Was, When, Deſcending from the Higheſt Heaven, He Enter'd Into the Womb of a Woman, and Made that his Abode ſo many Months together; In this Act Accommodating Himſelf to the General Notion of Men, who Suppoſe this to be the moſt Certain Proof of Real Friendſhip, to Suffer Every Thing for Thoſe whom we make the Object of Our Affection; And the more Unworthy the Object is, the Friendſhip is, therefore, the more Heroick and Sublime: He therefore had No Regard to Our Little Merit; All His Thoughts were taken up In Contriving how He might Teſtify an Exceſſive Love; That, Mankind, who are Naturally Sociable, And apt to be touch'd to the Soul by Friendſhip, might be Won by His, So as to prefer and fix the Heart on Him before Any Creature whatſoever: This is what has alſo Cauſed Him to Conceal His Majeſty, So as to Abaſe Himſelf III.

and Condeſcend even to the Low Eſtate of Us Mortals: For as St. *Auſtin* Says, * *Love and Majeſty are Incompatible*; For the One Drives and Keeps the Object at a diſtance, And the Other Attracts, and draws it Near; The One Removeth Hope far from it, and the Other Giveth it a foundation and aſſurance; Majeſty Commands Reſpect from whatſoever is Below or Inferior to it; But Love Enlivens and Rejoyces all thoſe who offer their Affections to it: So, That We may, with the Greater Freedom, have Recourſe to the Divine Bounty, Under all our Preſſures and Afflictions, Our Bleſſed Saviour has found Out this Stupendious Means to ſhroud his Majeſty; and Shadow his Own Glory: And This He has done So much In Condeſcenſion to Our Mean and Low Condition that it may be Seen How much he has Sacrificed, as it Were, his Own Ineffable Greatneſs, to Our Deſpicable and Poor Eſtate.

* *Serm.* 8. De Natali Domini.

IV. And This moſt Evidently Demonſtrates to us How Little They are In God's Sight who have too Great an Eſteem for Themſelves: † *God*, Says St. *Auſtin*, *is Above All*; *And If Thou Exalteſt thy Self, He will Haſten from Thee*; *If Thou doſt Abaſe and Humble Thy Self Low, He will Deſcend Into Thee*: Thus, altho' a Man May Sometimes, on Account of his Imployments In the World, The Weight of his Affairs, The Eminence of his Station, or upon Some Other Important Reaſons, Diſſemble his Humility Before Men, and Conceal the ſenſe He has of his Own Nothingneſs, and his Being but a Shadow and a Vain Bubble; yet it muſt be allow'd, that Nothing is more plain; Nothing Can more Expreſs the Approaches of the Soule to

† *Serm.* 2. De Aſcenſ. Dom.

to God, or Its Separation and Diſtance from Him, than the Inward Thoughts a Man Entertains of Himſelf, before the Divine Majeſty: But Becauſe it is an Eaſy Matter for a Man to Deceive Himſelf, In this Caſe; And that He who thinks he has but a Mean Opinion of his own Merit, may oftentimes Nouriſh ſome Secret Pride, that lies Deep and Latent in his Soule; For the Diſcovery of this Snare, It is Neceſſary to Obſerve, whether, In the Common Courſe of Life, we Love that which is Conducible to Mortify and Bring us Low; whether, from an Inward ſenſe and Conviction of our Own Unworthineſs, and a Real Abhorrence of ourſelves becauſe of it, we ſincerely Deſire to be *Slighted*, and to be put Into the Loweſt Place at the Feaſt; And whether We avoide and make out of the way of Preferment from the fear and Apprehenſion of God's Diſpleaſure; For, then, A Man may Aſſure himſelf of the Truth and Sincerity of his Inclinations; And when The Glory of God, The Good of his Neighbour, and The Nature of his Employment do Require it, He may Maintain his Authority and Power, among Men, without Infringing his Humility, or Ceaſing his Debaſement of Himſelf Secretly In Gods Sight: But if the Vanitys, and Honours of the World, Elate and Puff us up; If Contempt, and the Slightings of Men Afflict and Damp us; If Loſſes and Diſappointments Over-Load and Sink our Spirits, Clouding us with Sadneſs and Diſtaſt, ſo that we Become Fretful, Paſſionate, and Uneaſy, then have We Great Reaſon to Betake ourſelves to Gods Preſence, and there Bemoan the Sadneſs of our Condition; with Tears to Beſeech

Beſeech Him, to Vouchſafe to Infuſe into us the Spirit of Humility, that We may Perceive how far we are Eſtranged from the Purity of his Love, Since True Humility is a Qualification So abſolutely Neceſſary to true Charity; And be Perſwaded that we cannot Gain the Love of God but by the Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, *Who made Himſelf a Servant* to Manifeſt his Love to us.

V. And, Here, we muſt Not Forget the Exceeding Love of our Bleſſed Saviour Moſt Strictly to Unite himſelf to thoſe Souls whom He Lov'd ſo much: For altho' He Could have Created, for himſelf, a Paradiſe of Pleaſure, as He had done for our firſt Parent, and have Continu'd there, after He had been Cloathed with Our Humanity; Yet He Rather Choſe to Shadow Himſelf in the HOLY SACRAMENT, that He might, THEREBY, Become Food and Suſtenance to us, and Unite Himſelf to Our Hearts, after a Manner, More INTIMATE and Cloſe than 'tis poſſible to be Conceived.

By this Method He has Accompliſh'd, In a moſt Amazing ſenſe, the Words of the Bleſſed Apoſtle; * *Had not Grace been Super-Abundant, Sin had Abounded.* For, Either the Grace of God, or Sin, muſt have Reigned In us; Therefore Jeſus Chriſt, by this Sacrament, has taken the Poſſeſſion of Our Hearts, In which Sin, Before, had had Dominion. Mankind was Created Into the World, Not to be Made Miſerable, But to be for Ever Happy; And, to this Purpoſe it was that God Gave Him A Paradiſe to Dwell in; And tho' *Adam* forfeited and Loſt this Garden of Delights, by his Tranſgreſſion, God did not Change his Purpoſe towards him;

* Rom. 5. 8.

But

But Provided a New Paradiſe, by preſenting Him the Lamb of God, who is, as St. *John* Expreſſes it, the *Bleſſing and* * *The Light of the Celeſtial World!* It is He that is the Fountain of all the Bleſſings with which This Happy Manſion is fill'd; And That's the Bleſſed Paradiſe, In Every Reſpect, where He Reſides: It is His Deſire, alſo, to be United, to Every Soul, out of that Great Love he Bears to us, that Thoſe who Love Him may Enjoy him, and In the Poſſeſſion of Him find an Eternal Paradiſe, thro' their Repentance and Faith in Him, Even after they have loſt Him by their Tranſgreſſions: In this Paradiſe we are Refreſh'd with the Bread Of Life; Cheriſh'd with the Flames of the Divine Love, and Exalted Into the Preſence and Communion of the Celeſtial Spirits that Dwell with God!

* St. John 1. 9.

Whoever, then, does but Reflect, In a clear View, and with an Uncorrupt Heart, on the Contrivances of the Divine Love to Bring us to Himſelf, May Say with Holy *David*, * *My Heart and my Fleſh Leap for joy In the Living God!* My Fleſh, Becauſe That Beholds it Self not only United to the Divine Word, But alſo Predeſtinated to Receive Him Inwardly from the Bowels; And My Heart, Becauſe that finds itſelf Capable, even Upon Earth, to Enjoy Him, (In whom alone are All the Joy's of the very Heavens,) with a Pleaſant and Joyful Aſſurance that it ſhall Live In the Fruition of Him to all Eternity.

* Pſ. 16. 9.

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Divine Contemplation

Upon The Nine Months Which our Blessed Saviour Passed In The Womb Of The Blessed Virgin.

I. WHO Can Ever Comprehend, O My God, the Deep Purposes of Thine Eternal Wisdom! As much as 'tis possible for me to do, I Adore thee! And O! that I were able, according to my Will, to pay Adoration to Thee In Return to the Amazing Mysteries of Thy Love, And that Propensity which has Induced Thee to Purchase My Salvation! I am Desirous to fix my Love on Thee with all my Soul! to Serve Thee with all the Faculties and Strength within me; And to be wholly and Entirely Thine! But alas! All that I can Offer or pretend to devote to Thee, is Nothing In Comparison to those Infinite Mercies with which Thou hast prevented me and been before hand with me! Thou, O Thou Son of the Living God! Hast left the Bosom of thy Father, where thou didst Dwell, Before Time Began; where Thou wast *The Eternal Word, God of God, Equal to The Father* In thy Divinity, In thy Majesty, In thy Omnipotence, In thy Excellency, In thy Wisdom, In thy Glory, In thy Immensurate and perfect Felicity:

Felicity: Thou art Come that thou Mightest Cloath Thy Self with Our Natures; And Thou didst not, in the Least, Abhor to Dwell Nine Months in the Womb of a Woman, who, altho', for the Sanctity of her Soul she was Acceptable In thy Sight, yet was she not Exempt from those Corporeal Infirmities Common to those of her Sex. And yet, there is, In this place, O My God! less Matter of Astonishment and Wonder, than a Call to the Adoration and Love of the Immense Richnes of That Divine Goodness which has Brought Thee down to so Humble an Abasement for my Sake! Thou hast been pleased, O my Lord! And my God! To Suffer that which No Other Creature Could Sustain! It is thy Mercy which Proportions All Our Afflictions: But Thou hast been to us A Father of all Indulgence and Sweetness, and hath Used No harsh Rigour or Severity but to thine Own Self! Thou art only He among All Mankind, who has Undergon the Trouble of So Uneasy a Confinement; And this Thou hast done against all the Remonstrances of thine Own Omnificent Light and Wisdom, which are Ever Present and before Thee! How Ought We therefore Eternally to Bless and Glorifie thy Name, for So Great a Condescention and Mercy!

II. Thou must Needs Delight in Sufferings, O My Saviour! Since thy Goodness has Contrived Such as are New, and without any President; and which Thou, thy Self Only Wert Capable to Sustain. Thou Wouldest Surpass all Mankind In all Things; By a Love not Only Divine, But Unlimited and without Measure; By an Humility Beyond all Extent, with

with a Resolution for Suffering without any Regard to the Tenderness of thy Sacred Angels. By a Devotion to Souls without Relief. And by Demonstrating to mine that I Ought Never to fix its Confidence in any other Friend, any other Father, or Betake it self to any other Sanctuary besides Thee! From Whence Comes it then, O My God! That I do not Love Thee with all My Soul! What is it that I can do in Return to Thee, which would not be Infinitly below what I Owe unto Thee! Thou hast No Respect to any Limitation In thy Sufferings for My Soul, Because thy Love is immenſurable: But 'tis In a Quite Different manner Thou Diſpenſeſt them to me, when Thy Alwiſe Providence finds it meet to try my Heart by any Inſtance of Affliction; For Then, In Mercy, Thou doſt always Adequate and Propotion thy tender Indulgence to My Weakneſs! And yet notwithſtanding this, O My God! I do not forbear to Repine! I Refuſe to taſt of The Cup which Thou preſenteſt to me! And Remove it from me as far as I am able! O Divine Jeſus! O Eternal Excellency! How little do I Love Thee! And How ought I for Ever to Adore Thee! O Change this Weakneſs, In me, and This Cold Faintneſs In my Fleſh, Into a Reſolution and Ardency to Suffer for Thee! O Teach me to abhor that Lukewarmneſs and Indiſpoſition towards Thee! And as Thou Thy Self haſt Endured Affliction and Terrors, Even to the Bitter Death upon the Croſs, Do Thou deſtroy, Likewiſe, the fondneſs which I Bear to This Body of Sin which has Undone me! And make it, O Lord, humble and Submiſſive as it Ought to be, to the kind Impulſes of thy Bleſſed and moſt Holy Spirit.

But

But from whence is it, O Thou who art The Saviour of the World! The Very Glory of Paradise it self, and the Joys of the Happy, Whence is it, that Thou hast Given to Our first Parent at his Creation, an Abode of Delight, Exempt from all the Miseries that We Are Obnoxious to! And why hast Thou not made choice of, and Provided for Thy Self, who art The Restorer of Mankind, and Our true Father In the most Dear and tender sense, no Better Then a Place of Want and Miseries! O Thou Infinite Wisdom! Thou Physician and Cure of all my Sores! By The Blessings Thou didst Shower down upon Our First Parent at his Creation, Thou hast made it Appear, That Thou hadst no Pleasure in Our Miseries; But, Thy Gracious Purpose was to Make us Happy, without Labour, without Sorrow, to Exalt us, like Princes, into a Paradise of Delight, 'till we should be Translated from Thence to the *Everlasting Kingdom of God!* But, the Weakness of Our Nature Could not Bear This Felicity, without forgetting it self; And Since our Father, *Adam*, Lost Himself, Amidst these Delights, 'tis Necessary that his Offspring should Regain Them with Great Pains and Travel: It is, therefore out of Necessity, and the Good Will to Save us, That Thou hast sent us into This School of pain and Tears, that we may Learn that Humility and be Instructed In that Submission and Obedience We Owe Thee; And, to Demonstrate The Exuberance of Thy Love to us, Thou thy Self art Come to Search us out, In our Wandering State, to Comfort and Support us In Our Sufferings, and to Share 'em with us! But This thy Lot is by No Means

III.

Means Equal! For if I Receive a Stroke from Thy Fatherly, Indulgent Hand, thou Receiveſt a Thouſand on My Score! And if Thou layeſt any Burden upon me Thou Carrieſt Both me and That upon Thine Own Shoulders! Inſomuch that Thy Happineſs and Pleaſure ſeems to Conſiſt In This, Even In Being The God of my Comfort, and my Guide to Inſtruct and Teach me In the Way, to Heal me, to be my Companion, and to Enrich me with thy Treaſures.

IV. O Thou Infinite Mercy! I Bluſh with Confuſion, before Thee, When I Reflect upon my Self, and that I ſhould Preſume to put my Self Into the Leaſt Compariſon In Reſpect to Thee! Unhappy Offſpring of My Father *Adam!* I am driven out of Paradiſe! And Wander on In Queſt of Some Strange and New World, altho, I ſhall only Sojourn In the Abode of Tears and Miſery! I am Attach'd and Rivetted to the Trifles of This World, to ſuch a degree as Even utterly to Deſtroy and Ruin my Self for Their Sakes! Theſe are the Things which Engage my Thoughts, my Senſes, my Appetites, as if They were the Very, and Eternal Goods: For the Sake of Theſe Enjoyments I Run Precipitate Into Death, and Abandon and forſake Thee, O thou Life of my Soul! Thou Wouldeſt not Suffer a Single moment to Eſcape Thee without Enduring ſome pain for my Sake, But as for me, How Willingly Would I Run Thro' my whole Life, In the Momentary Pleaſures and Enjoyments of the World! I make thy Creatures to be my Gods, by Sacrificing my Heart to Them, which Ought to be devoted to Thee Only; from Whence I am Become more than Wretched for Refuſing Thy Comforts for them! The Exceſs

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and Outrage of my Folly Carried me so far Even as towards the rude part with thine Enemies, and have made me So much a Slave to Sin, as to run headlong Course to pursue its Dictates against thy most Holy Commandments. O Unhappy Days! O Wretched Time, Confused Impiety, And Abominations! Thou hast Beheld it All, O Lord! And 'tis with Shame and Confusion that I speak it! Yet I will Acknowledge them Before Thee, In the Bitterness of my Soul! O Do thou, My God, of thy Mercy, Blot them Out! Tear Out of my Heart the Love of Sin and of the World! And Repair the Ruines of my Inner Part!

O that I had Never offended Thee! Give me Grace, I Beseech Thee, that all the Vanities and Pleasures of the World may Become Unto My Taste as Vinegar and Gall! That I may know No Other Pleasure, but to Humble my Self, and to Suffer with Thee, My Most Amiable Redeemer! That I may have nothing Pleasant to my Palat But thy Sweets, No Sensation But of thy Love, (for Thou art always And In all things the Same, in thy Self,) That Thou Mayst always appear to me as thou art O Thou Dear and most true Friend to my Soul! That I may always Behold Thee, *Fairer than the Children of Men!* All Beautiful and Glorious In the very Infancy of Thy Life, as well as In the Series and Succession, and Even In the End of it. Thou art always the Same, that is, always *Rich In Mercy and Redemption*! When Thou Cameſt Into the World Thou didſt not Refuse to take up thy Lodging, and Residence In a Human Body, that I might be Strengthened V.

In my Faith, and Depend upon thy Word when Thou Sayſt Unto my Soul, *I will Enter Into Thee and Dwell There!* 'Tis for thy Information, that Thou Gaſt Inclos'd Thy Self in the Bowels of thy Bleſſed Mother; and to Convince me, before hand, of the Deſire Thou haſt to Become Our Nourishment and Heavenly Food. Why! My God! Was it not Enough for Thee to Search into the Inward Bowels, So long as Thou Didſt Dwell among Men, Unleſs Thou ſhouldſt yet Inhabit there Since Thou haſt been Glorify'd in Heaven! Is it poſſible thou ſhouldſt have the Good Will to Dwell In Me, to Enter into my Body, And, More than that, into my Inner Soul! O How true is it, My Lord! That * *Thy Delights are In Being among the Sons of Men!* What Couldſt Thou find in me, that moved Thee ſo ardently to Deſire to Dwell with me! Thou Ever Carry'ſt thy Treaſure with Thee, what, then, Couldſt Thou find more in an Indigent Wretch, who is Nothing elſe but Miſery and Sin! that Thou wert not Content In the fruition of Thy Self, but wouldſt needs Converſe and Live with Me! Thou art, In Thy Self a Paradiſe of Infinite Pleaſures! What Addition Couldſt thou think to find in my Indigence! And How could it be poſſible, if I may preſume to Say So, that Such a wretched Creature, as my Self, Should Become any Paradiſe to That God who is the Eternal Happineſs of The Bleſſed! O that I had A Sufficient Meaſure of thine Enlightning Grace to perceive thy Miracles, and Enough of thy Love to Search after Thee without Intermiſſion? Alas! I plainly See the Reaſon why Thou

* Prov. 8. 31.

Thou couldst but with me! It is Because Thou
art The Sanctity, The Centre of All Happiness!
And since all is Found in Thee, I shall Live in
a Most Blessed State, where I shall Taste
the Most Sweet of Life, The Fruits of Wisdom
and Love, by the Communication of Thy Self
which alone can Impart to my Soul, With The
Riches, The Divine Graces of Thy Indulgent
Sweetness.

VI. Give me Grace, O My God! And my Supreme Good, That I may find more Joy and Pleasure in Thee, than in all the Vanities of The Creation; more than in Health and Beauty, The Glories of the World, or the Applause of Men; More than in Empire and Dominion, or in Riches, or Knowledge, or Even Friendship it Self, or Reputation, or Praise, or, in a Word, than all other Blessings which Thou Thy Self Couldst Confer upon me, whether in This present or the *Invisible World*: For Thou art Infinitely more Amiable Even than all the Blessings Thou hast in Store: Thou only art Thou most High, The Almighty, The Most Excellent, and Illustrious of All Beings! Thou art the True Heaven, and without Thy Divine Presence, Heaven it self would be but a place of Exile! My Soul could never find any perfect, Solid Rest but only in Thee! This, O Lord! Thou knowest, And for that very Reason 'tis That Thou hast Contrived So Mysterious a way to Dwell in me, that I might also Dwell in Thee! Thou hast Searched me Out when I was Forgotten; Thou Comest Unto me whilst I am flying from Thee, and Thou Threatenst me with Death when I withdraw my self from Thy Presence! O Jesus! Thou most Im-

maculate Bridegroom of my Soul! When shall I See my Self Released from my Self that I may Dwell In Thee! When Will the Happy Hour Approach, When, totally taken up In Adoration of Thy Divine Perfections, I shall taste how Sweet and pleasant Thou Art! When shall I give my Self up Entirely to Thee, that, Being wholly In possession of Thy Love, I may not, any more, fix my thoughts upon my Self But upon Thee! What is there In any of those Enjoyments with which I have been affected, which have driven me away from thy Presence, which have Given me So much Vexation, and Made me So Sad, and have Occasioned a Thousand Errors and Distractions In me; and thrown me down to Grovel In Mud and Filth, In Carking after the World, and thereby prevented my Entrance Into thy Presence, and the Enjoyment of Thee! Behold me Here Before thee, My Dear Saviour! Who art The Brightness, The Glory, and Consolation of my Soul In this My Pilgrimage! But I know not what to Say to Thee In favour of my Self! The Voice of my Necessity and Poverty will Speak Louder than that from my Lips! And The Cries of my Miseries, Will Drown my Soul In the Abysse of Thy Mercies! Hearken to This Voice, O My God! And make Hast to to Come unto thy Poor and Unworthy Servant! to Comfort me with Thy Presence, who art my Joy, and without whom I cannot be at Peace! I am A Wretched Creature! full of Error and Sin; And So I shall Continue till Thou shalt please to Discover thy Self to me with the Joy of thy Countenance, and that I may See, By that Blessing, that I am Delivered from

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my Own Corruptions: Let others Purſue their own Pleaſures. As for me, Nothing gives me Satisfaction, Nothing Can Content me, But Thee, O Thou that art Dearer to My Soul! Come then; And, Since it is Thy Deſire to be with me, Behold me Ready to Receive Thee! Open Thou my Heart, Moſt Dear Saviour! Say to it, in theſe Words of Life, Behold *I am Thy Salvation*! And Encircle it at the Same time with the Ambient Flame of thy Divine Love.

O Thou Moſt Sacred Mother of God! Moſt Chaſt and Pure Virgin! Who haſt been thought Worthy to Incloſe this Celeſtial Treaſure Within thy Womb During the Term of Nine Months! Thou haſt Not Received Him only for thy Own Advantage; Thou haſt preſerved him, and Nouriſh'd him, and He has been Committed to Thy Truſt, for my Sake alſo; Let me, then, have my Part In Him, O Thou Mother of Mercy; Give me a Share In This Redeemer! And O Let me Deſtroy Every Thing that Separates me from Him and his Love, Since His own Good Will Diſpoſes Him to Dwell in us; And that He Abhors Nothing Related to us but Sin, put me In a Way, a Courſe of Innocence and Chaſtity, that Becoming pure, I may be Rendred Capable to Enjoy Him. And All Ye Bleſſed Spirits, over whom This Our Amiable Redeemer Reigns at Preſent without any Let or Oppoſition, Spare me But one Spark of That Divine Love with which you Are Enflamed, that It may Kindle In my Soul The Lamp of Life, till I ſhall Come to be a partaker with you In that State of Felicity which you now poſſeſs, and will to Endleſs Ages. *Amen.*

[redacted]

THE Third Instance OF THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST.

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CHAP. III.

In The Violence He Suffer'd from his Love, Being Shut up, Nine Months, In the Womb without Action.

I. OUR Blessed Saviour Suffer'd Yet Another Affliction, In The Womb of His most Holy Mother, as a Natural Consequence of that Ardent Affection with which He was even Consumed for His Fathers Glory: This Oppression was an Extreme Violence He then Used to

to his Love; By Retarding its Impulſes to That Great Work for which He came Into the World: Love is of the Nature of Fire; It is the moſt Quick and Lively Motion of The Heart; As Fire is More Active than all the Other Elements: And God, In The Holy Scripture, is Called * *a Conſuming Fire*, from the Amazing Operations of his Love, which would appear Unworthy of his Majeſty, if They did not Proceed from an Infinite Bounty: For, All Thoſe Attributes which Expreſs His Power and Greatneſs, Such as when we call Him The Puiſſant, The Invincible, The Almighty, The Fierce, The Incenſed, The Deſtroyer, &c. They All Entirely Quadrate to The Divine Love, and Repreſent the true and proper Quality of This Fire, which is the Principle and firſt Spring of All the Wonderful Works of God: And, As Fire never Exerts its force more Senſibly, than when it falls upon a proper Combuſtible; So The Energy of This Love, Ambient on the Divine Mind, Is, to all Purpoſes, of a moſt Incomprehenſible Extract and Operation: From this Fire it is that the Incarnate Word was all Inflamed In the Womb of his Bleſſed Mother, In Waiting the Courſe of Nature for his Advent Into the World; that He might Inform us In his Heavenly Doctrine, Undergo the Puniſhments we had Deſerved; And Set Open the *Torrent*, Thoſe *Rivers of Pleaſure* to us! All the while of this Confinement, He was Labouring with a Deſire to Accompliſh the Great Work of our Redemption, and Conſtrain'd to Continue In that Covert, and Uncogniſable State, not only many Months, but

* Deut. 4. 24.

many Years, even till The fulness of Time was come According to the decree of the Eternal Counsel of the Trine-One Godhead.

II. So, This Love of God, thus Confin'd, and meeting No Way to Break forth, and Expand it Self, But being Detain'd with Violence, by Him, who was Resolv'd to Undergo All; Prey'd upon his Heart; It Wasted, It Consumed it: Thus * *Hope Deferred maketh the Heart Sick*, as The Holy Scripture does Express it; And If, The more a Good is Desired and Esteemed, the more pungent is the Delay of its Fruition: How Great, then, was the Affliction of This Blessed Soul, when He found himself Obliged to Wait The Accretion of His Body, to finish his Work In? Or, In Other Words, to Load us with his Blessings, and to be Himself, Over-whelmed and Surcharged which with all the Load of our Sin and Punishments which He had, before, Resolved to Undergo! It was the Opinion of † St. *Austin*, that if God were Capable of any Sufferings, It must be from The Effects of his Love: For, as He is full of Love, or, to Speak Better, as He is Love it self, Nothing Could Afflict Him, but Not to be Beloved, and to See, that what He had Done, and what He had Suffered, for Mankind, would Not Profit them! But what He Could not Suffer, as God, He Accomplish'd In the Human Nature, Hypostatically United; which He would have had us know, the first Moment of this Mysterious Incarnation, that from thence we might have been Sensable of the Greatness of his Love; But the Time which He was to Stay In his Mothers Womb, would not allow that,

* Prov. 13. 12.

† *Epist.* 144.

that; This Delay, therefore, Caused In Him an Extremity of Anguish, thro' the Impatience of His Desire to have it Finish'd: He had taken Our Humanity Upon Him, as the most Proper Instrument to Express an Infinite Love by; And He was under a Necessity to Retard its Motions, that he might wait the Course of Human Nature. This Truth Appeared most Evidently So Soon as His Love Had the Power to Act: After what a Severe Manner did He treat His own Sacred Humanity! What Artifice did He not make use of to Bring it into Suffering! Nature Used All its force, to Allay and Qualify the Excess of this Divine Love; Therefore our Blessed Saviour, finding that He Could not, In his Human Nature, Undergo So much as He Would, and Wish'd to do, Contrived, Before He Gave up His Precious Blood for us, a Means to Become our Nourishment, that, by being United into the Same Body with us, He might In the Successions of time, even to the End of the World, thus Act and Suffer, In Us, That which He could Neither Do nor Suffer, In Himself; And, Even, after His Bitter Death, He would have his Pierced Side Still Continue Open, to Satisfy the Longings of His Love; And, That He might Manifest to The whole World, that, By his Ascension Into Heaven with this Wound, and those Others In his Hands and his Feet, the Heavenly Fountains should be for Ever Open and Flowing to us.

There are Two Instances, which might be Sufficient to Inform any One of what has been said concerning the Love, of Our most Blessed

ed Redeemer towards Mankind; The One is The Inclination of Saints Towards God; And That Passion which Sensual Worldlings Bear towards the Objects of their Appetites: The Affection of Holy Saints, who have Devoted Themselves to God, is A Spark of that Eternal Fire which Animates the Divine Essence; And with which our Blessed Saviour was Inflamed; And, It Commonly, Produces In Good Men, the Same Effects with those it wrought in our Blessed Saviour: It Incessantly Perplexes and Torments them; It Makes them Lead a Life full of Sorrow and Affliction; It Torments Them to Live without Him in whom their whole Soul and Affection Dwells; And, that They are not able, In This Separation from their God, And, Loaded as they Are with the Burden of the Flesh, to Perform the Duty which He Requires of Them: From thence it Comes to Pass, that They oftentimes lose the Relish of all Sensual Objects; That They pass whole Nights without Sleep; That the Most Innocent Recreations Become Toilsom, And the very Meat they Eat Loathsom and Ungrateful; For, Their Love of God, which Predominates so Powerfully within Them, Sheds and Diffuses a Bitter upon all the Rest; And Suffers them Not to Concern themselves with Any thing else Besides Him. All that they Do Seems as if they Did Nothing; They Burn with a Desire to be Consumed Entirely by this Sacred Flame; Whilst, (The Soul being Clouded by the Flesh, and Unable to keep way with the Allurements of the Heart) They pass their Days In a Continual Trouble and Vexation: For this Reason 'tis, that Those who Attain to this State, are

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Generally, Infirm and Sickly, and of a Weak and Feeble Conſtitution; That which they Suffer within is quite Another thing! But, there is not Room to Repreſent this Matter here; Very few are Capable to Comprehend it! None, but Thoſe who have Experienc'd The Truth on't; who Actually know how this Refined and Sublime Paſſion Affects the Soul, Can tell what it Undergoes, that is poſſeſt of it: How very Difficult it is, by Words, to Repreſent this Sweetneſs, this Tranquility, ever Blended with Grief and Torment! And, In Short, How much Patience is Required, under the Loads and Diſquietude of Life, In that State, than In all the Miſchiefs and Troubles In the World! It is In This ſenſe that The Apoſtle Reckon'd Himſelf So Wretched! The *Heavineſs of The Fleſh would not permit him to follow the Motions of the Spirit*; And for This it is, that Having a Taſt, of Jeſus Chriſt, Alive, In Him, He look'd upon *Death as the* * *Commencement and Beginning of his Felicity*; And, that Holy *David* Comforted his Afflicted Soul, In the full Hope and Aſſurance, that It ſhould, One Day, be wholly *Taken up In the Uttering Gods Praiſe, and that* † *His Tears ſhould be his Meat and Drink, Day and Night; Becauſe He did not Appear In the Preſence of his God!* By This, The Holy Prophet Sufficiently Shews, that the Inward Anguiſh of his Love, by far, Exceeded All that he could Suffer from without.

* Phil. 1. 21.

† Pſ. 42. 3.

But, if One Single Spark, of the Divine Love, Confin'd within the Narrow Compaſs of this Mortal Life, has Cauſed So Great Affliction to Holy and Devoted Saints, that their Exil, from Him They Lov'd So, Becauſe ſo Inſupportable

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unto them; How Great must the Torments of The Blessed Jesus needs have Been, who had The Fulness of This Divine Attribute, when he saw himself Obliged to Wait So long, for the Moment, when he should Begin the Great Work of Our Redemption, to his Fathers Glory! And for Our Salvation!

IV. There are few Insensible of the Transports of Sensual and Unlawful Appetite, And with what Force it Exerts it self Towards its Object; with what Anguish it Endures a Separation from it; Its Eagerness to come to the Sight of it; The Joy and Rapture In its Possession; The fear of losing it; And the Desperate Regret and Pain for it, when its Gone: This Passion Never Leads the Soul to Consider the Qualifications of its Object, whether Good or Evil; But, Pursues it with Such Ardour as to Dispise and Count all the Pains it Requires, as Nothing to Obtain it; Whatever Opposes its Bent, however Justifiable it may be, yet it is All look'd upon as Odious and Unreasonable; And, on the other hand, It Pursues, and Embraces, without Distinction, Every thing that any way Conduces to its Satisfaction: It Attempts Every thing; It Undertakes the Greatest Difficulties. And, There can be nothing Intolerable to it, But the Privation of that which It has fix'd upon: A Man, In This Condition, Becomes Insensible, Blind, Obstinate, Incapable of Any Good Advice; And Maintains Such a Conduct as He himself would Condemn were he less Overcome with his Passion: This yet appears more Evidently In Those, who, being Affected with Some Impression of the Divine Grace, strive to Break their Chains, and Tear them-

themſelves from the Creature, to Return to God; For, then, They See plainly with what Obſtinacy, and Blindneſs, A Soul Immers'd In Worldly and Terreſtrial Inclinations, Sets it ſelf In Oppoſition to Right Reaſon, to Truth, and to God.

I Omit many Other Reflexions which Experience ſhews us Every Day we Live: And I'll only Say Thus much, That the Miſeries of This Life do not Proceed out of the Duſt, or from Themſelves; But from the Irregular Inclinations of Our Heart, which too much Hankers After that which it cannot Obtain, or that, Can find No Repoſe In that which it does Poſſeſs, After it has Purſu'd it, with ſo Great Appetite and Deſire. Becauſe, The Heart of Man is Greater Than the Temporary Goods which it, Covets; and therfore, It can by No means, find Complete Satisfaction In Them; And Thus, the Soul, Continually toſs'd about by its own Irregular Appetites, Labours under the juſt Judgments of God's Determination againſt all Thoſe Senſual Men, who have Thrown Off Their Affections to him, for the Sake of the Enjoyments of this Tranſitory World: For it is from The All-wiſe, All-juſt Appointment, at St. *Auſtin* has Expreſs'd it, That Every Soul, that Deviates from his Love, ſhall Become, Its own Puniſhment, and Its own Tormenter.

But If the Love of The Things of this World, which being far Diſtant from any ſhare In Gods Love, Is but a faint Repreſentation of it, or Like the Pourtraict of Fire, In a piece of Painting, To a Real Flame; If This Appetite, I Say, has So Great an Influence up n the Soul, what Violence did not The Divine Love of

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Christ Sustain, whilst it was Confin'd within the Virgins Womb!

V. Now, when A Christian Comes to Cast his Eyes upon These two Different Passions, How is it Possible for him not to be Confounded! For, if He Compares his own with the Strength and, Purity of his Blessed Saviours Love, He must Needs find Himself, as The * Father, Speaking of his Own Extravagancies, Acknowleged, He was, *As in a Foreign, and most Remote Country, At The Utmost Distance and Opposition*: For, The Excellence and Dignity of the Soul Consisting In its Resemblance which the Image of The Creator, when, Like Any Other Prodigal Son, It forsakes That Happy Region of the Divine Resemblance, It Cannot but Ramble, Then, Into a Distant Country, where it shall, Like a Slave, be Loaden with The Weight of Misery and Confusion, and Meet with Nothing, In The Least, Expressive of the Purity and Glory of Its Creator: But if A Man Cannot Comprehend The Great Mystery, of the Ineffable Love of Christ, Nevertheless, He may Convince Himself That He is far Distant from Him; He may Perceive, by The Vileness of his Carnal Affections, And, by the Consciousness and Misgivings of his Heart which they bring upon him, that He is Estranged from his Saviour, and Devoted Only to his own Lust; And, with Confusion, He will find that He has Done Nothing, In Gratitude or Duty to that Meritorious Redeemer to whom He Owes His very Being; All that he Enjoys, And All that He Can hope for, for Ever.

* St. Aug. *Conf. L.* 4. *Ch.* 11.

A Divine

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon The Violence which the Bleſſed Jeſus Offer'd to his Love, In Confining it Nine Months without Action.

THOU Canſt not Reſt, O Thou Celeſtial Flame! O Divine Love! Without Action! And when Thou Seemeſt, Outwardly, to be Unactive, It is THEN Thou art In the Greater Conflict within! Thou art A God of Love! O Moſt Amiable Jeſus! Thou art a Pure Fire! And Thou Needeſt Nothing but thy Love, to Torment thy Self withall; To What Straits has it Reduced Thee, By being So Cloſe Confin'd for So ſmall A Time! What Extreme Violence haſt Thou not Suffered by this Impriſonment So Contrarious to thy Nature! We have always a moſt Quick and lively ſenſe of that which we moſt Ardently Deſire; But Thou, O Lord! Doſt Labour, and art on Fire to Acumulate thy favours upon me! To Waſh me Clean with thy Blood! To Suffer Ignominy, and Sorrow, and to Die for me! And to Become, A *Full*, *Perfect*, and *Sufficient* I.

Sufficient Sacrifice, to Gain my poor Love, In Requital, and for my Salvation! And, Becauſe thou Couldſt not Offer up this Sacrafice of Thy Self, Sooner, Thou didſt *Sigh* and *Groan* in Anguiſh, and Inwardly Repine, and Waſt thy Bleſſed Soul with Grief!

Thou Thoughtſt it Long, to make Thy Appearance In the World; But Thou waſt Conſtrained to a Place of Obſcurity! It was Thy Gracious Deſire to Rejoice Mankind with The *Glad Tidings* of Thy moſt Sacred and Eternal Truths; But Thine Own Infinite Wiſdom, Saw it Fit, that Thou Shouldſt, for a while, keep Silence! Thou waſt In Haſt to Call Sinners to Repentance! Thoſe Labourers, So *Heavy Laden*, unto Thee! To Heal them of Their diſeaſes; To fill the World with Thy Miracles and Thy Bleſſings; And, at Laſt, to Suffer and to Die for Mankind; And yet Thou waſt Obliged for a time to dwell, In Obſcurity, among Them! Thou Waſt Obedient, Under all Theſe Oppoſitions, out of Love to Thine Eternal Father! But, In Thy Reſignation, Thou didſt Languiſh with Deſire, Wiſhing, Thou didſt Waite with Eagerneſs, and Trouble, The Courſe of Nature! Whilſt Thou waſt not Come to Years Capable of Going Thro' Thoſe Exceeding and Prodigious Labours to which Thou waſt Decreed, Even THEN, Thou hadſt a Share of Suffering, by Thoſe Delays which God and Nature Did Require: It was An Affliction to Thy Soul, That The World knew Nothing of: And none But Thoſe that Love Thee, O my God! Can Comprehend it.

If Thy Servants, When thou doſt Vouchſafe to Inſpire them with the Leaſt Feeling of thy Goodneſs, and Divine Love; If They are So Touch'd to the Quick, and have ſuch a lively Senſe, of the Errors and Follies of the World; Of the Continuance of their Exile from Thee; of Zeale for thy Glory; And the Salvation of Mankind, their fellow Creatures; If their Impotency, to Accompliſh what thy Love and the Eagerneſs of their Deſires to fulfil thy pleaſure, Inſpire them with, be as it were a Continual Martyrdom Unto them; If One Single Spark of this Fire, which Comes from Thee, but gets within them, the Illaps Conſumes them thus; What does the whole Force and Circumambience of this Divine Flame produce In Thee, O Lord! The Impatience, the Expectation, the Delay with the whole Plenitude of Productions from this pure, Unmixt Fire of thy Gracious Endearments! II.

But, O Bleſſed Lord! Haſt thou No place Where to Employ this Thy Love! Canſt thou Not Aſſwage this Torment of thine! Behold, A Poor, Diſtreſſed Creature, at Thy Feet! Full of Confuſion, and Sin; Who Can find No Relief, but only from Thy Goodneſs! Caſt thine Eye of Mercy, thine Infinite Compaſſion, upon My Inward Wretchedneſs, and Miſery; and Heal thoſe Mortal Wounds which are So fatal and So Numerous about Me!

At what a diſtance do I find my Self driven from Thee, O my God! And How has The Conduct of my Life been the Reverſe of Thine! As, from the Motions of thy Divine Love, Thou Doſt draw Near to my Soul, So Con- III.

ſtantly Does the Love of this World Separate me, and Keep me at at diſtance, from Thee! I Run, with an Inſatiable Appetite, after theſe Sublunary Enjoyments; I am Tormented when I cannot Compaſs 'em; or when I find they Cannot anſwer the Cravings of my Soul! With Impatience do I waite for them, and with Eagerneſs I Purſue them; But 'tis with a Diſquietude and Trouble that I Enjoy them, and Loſe them with A Reſtleſs pain and Anguiſh! And, 'tis but juſt that They ſhould give all theſe Torments, Since they Separare me from Thee, who art my Only Reſt, my Life, and my Supreme Good! Miſerable Creature that I am! Altho' I know the Vanity of all theſe Amuſements, and Trifles In my Way; yet, O my God! I do not underſtand Either what I am, my Self, or What Thou art; Elſe I ſhould die with Regret and Sorrow, that ever I have Eſteemed Thee leſs than the World, or Quitted Thee for any Other Enjoyment for One Moment!

How do I ſtand obliged, Eternally, to Celebrate thy Mercies! For Alas! Where ſhall I be without Thy Preſence! Whether ſhould I Wander, wert not Thou Omnipreſent, and In all Places! Could Any Bounded Goodneſs be Ever able to Support me! How many times, O my God! Since Thou haſt Enter'd Into my Soul with a deſire to Dwell There, and to Enrich it with thy Graces, have I driven Thee from me without Bluſhing at what I had done, and without Regard to Thee, that I might make Room for my Exorbitant Luſts; to give them the Dominion In Thy Stead! Thou Saweſt it, O Lord! How Far my

Soul

Soul went Aſtray; Thou Calledſt it Home; And I Returned, and have found, InThee, a moſt Indulgent Father, full of Tenderneſs and Affection; A Friend moſt Endearing; And an Injured Redeemer, Ready to forget All my Ungrateful Relapſes and Deviation from Him. Thou, O my Deareſt Lord! Haſt again Received, and Accepted of me, Thou haſt Given me a Gracious Welcome; Thou haſt Inſpired me with thy moſt Comfortable and Wholſom Counſels; Thou haſt fill'd All my Soul with Joy at thy Return Into me; And, after all this, I have ſtill the Inflexible Obdurancy and Ingratitude, Not to Devote my Self, *Intirely*, to thy Love! I Return again to my former Vicious Inclinations; I go on to Eſtrange Thee from me, by new Tranſgreſſions, and make it my Choice Rather to Offend and Grieve Than to Enjoy thee!

Is it Poſſible that I ſhould be Yet alive; O my God! And How Can I Reflect, upon all theſe Inſtances of my Folly and Ingratitude, and Confeſs them In thy Preſence, and Not Sink down and Periſh with Grief and Shame! O Thou Infinite Mercy! O Immenſe Goodneſs! O Eternal Sweetneſs! How Many Motives haſt Thou, to caſt me, for Ever, from thy Preſence! to throw me Headlong into Hell, and Give me up to the Fury of thoſe Infernal Spirits! Thou haſt Infinite Reaſon; *But thou haſt Not The Will*, to Precipitate me Into This Gulph of Miſery and Torment; But, Inſtead of that, Thou Beareſt with me; Thou Waiteſt for my Converſion, and Repentance; Thou Thy Self Suffereſt me to Slight and Diſregard Thee, IV.

Out of thy Compaſſionate Deſire to See me Reconciled to Thee; And, Thou Stretcheſt forth thy Hand, *yet Still*, unto me! O Thou Life of my Soul! In what a Deſperate, and Wretched Condition am I, when I forſake Thee! I am then Without Life; Without Strength; Without Light; Without Soul; Dead; Helpleſs; In Outer Darkneſs, and Degenerate Into Malice and all Wickedneſs; A Slave to Sin, And The Author of it! All This is too little to Expreſs my Condition, then! I am without Thee, Who art my God, my All, my Supreme Good, and my Only Hope; And 'tis That which adds the Load, and Compleates my Diſtreſſed Caſe.

How Miſerable is my Condition! Will the Time of my Pilgrimage never have an End! And ſhall I never Behold my Self Out of the Danger of Loſing Thee! Pardon me, O Lord! Forgive me! My Divine Saviour! Forgive me, Thou Lamb of God, Whatever Thou doſt find Diſpleaſing in me! Give me a Broken Heart, that I may look Inward, upon my Sins, with Contrition and Sorrow! That I may Caſt them All, And my Self with them, Body and Soul, Into That Celeſtial Fire which Flames In Thee! Heal me, O Lord! And make me Clean, and Change my Vileneſs and Corruption Into thy Purity and Holineſs, and Perfect the Eternal Purpoſes of thine Infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs to my Soul.

V. When ſhall I See my Self In ſuch ſure Poſſeſſion of thy Love, that I may Truly Say Thou art My God, My Soul, My Lord, My All, I have All from Thee, And I am All Thine

Thine! When ſhall I be ſo Wiſe as to Deſpiſe All the Pleaſures and Fleeting Enjoyments of the World, ſo as to Deſire Nothing But Thee alone! When ſhall I be ſo Sufficiently Weary of This World, as to Abhor, as much as I have Loved, its Temptations! At this Moment I Burn with Eagerneſs to Love and to poſſeſs Thee, O Thou Life of my Life! Grant that this Fire of my Love to Thee, may Never be Extinguiſh'd! And that The Sufferings with which It would Recommend It Self to Thee, may Try me, but Not Extinguiſh it, *for Ever!* What wouldſt Thou have me to Do, O My Deareſt Love! Let All, that I have Ever fix'd My Heart upon, to this Moment, turn Againſt me, that I may turn to Thee! It is my deſire to Break with All the World; And to have No Enjoyment, No Reſt, but In Thy Embraces! I Renounce them All for thy Love! There is Nothing that I covet but Thy Self, My Saviour! To Thee I Yeild; And, *There*, I Devote my Self without Reſerve: O Make me to go thro' whatever Thou ſhalt Pleaſe! The Sharpeſt Affliction ſhall be Sweet Unto me, Since it is Thy Love that fixes me to that Croſs!

Teach me, O Lord! To Carry Theſe Weights of my Fleſh, that I Offend not Thee, that I loſe Thee not for ever! Learn me to Undergo Much for Thee; And Infinitely more to Prize and Value Thee, than All thoſe Trifles which are Nothing In Reſpect to Thee; That I may Count Nothing Loss, but the Want of Thy Favour; And Nothing to be Gain but only Thy Love! That I may Abhor every thing that would Separate Me from

Thee; And fix my Heart on thoſe things which will bring me Near unto Thee! Thou art my only Delight! The Only Aim of my Life, of my Inclinations, and my Actions! Let me find Thee out; Let me Sigh and Pant after Thee; Let me Unite my Self Unto Thee; And Let All, whatever is not Related to Thee, Become my Averſion, and Inſupportable Unto me! That my ſenſes and my Thoughts may Terminate In Thee alone, that I may feel No Comfort but In Suffering for thy Sake, and In the Performance of thy Bleſſed Will.

Forget, O Lord, the Sins that I have Committed! And Vouchſafe, Graciouſly, to Behold the Good Deſires Thou haſt Inſpired Into me: Thou knoweſt better than any One, what Anxiety The Expectation of what One moſt Ardently Longs for, Cauſes to the Soul: Make Haſt, then, O Moſt Amiable Jeſus! Come Quickly to me! And Unite me Cloſe Into thy Self; For I am Impatient with the Deſire of the Fruition of Thee! Come Lord Jeſus! Come Quickly! And, with thy Glorious Preſence Diſpel the Darkneſs and Errors of my Mind; And O! Let Its Greateſt Pain be, to Wait thy Coming! O Holy Love! When wilt Thou Accompliſh thy Merciful Operation in me! Muſt it needs Be, that Thou ſhouldſt be Always taken up In Sacrificing this Innocent, Immacculate Lamb, to Pain and Torment! Wilt thou not alſo Undertake to Subdue, and Tame this Savage Wolf, that I Offer to Thee! And ſhall I never See my Self Quite Chang'd Into Thee, and Poſſeſſed of Thee!

VI. Is it Any Wonder that I ſhould So Ardently Breath after Thee, O Thou, who art The God of

of my Heart! Alaſs I am Undone without Thee! And Thou Canſt find Nothing More In the Poſſeſſion of me, than the Satisfaction Thou takeſt In Loving me, And Accumulating thy Bleſſings on me: For Altho' Thou didſt dwell So long In Obſcurity, and Silence; Tho' Thou didſt Not Suffer So much as Thou Mightſt deſire to do, during the firſt Nine Moneths of thy Life, Yet didſt thou not paſs them In Unactive Idleneſs; Thou didſt Employ *All that Time*, Under a ſenſe of my Sins, and The Judgment due to them; And In the Vouluntary Oblation of thy Self to God the Father, to be an Attonement for them, Thereby, to Obtain the Pardon of My Offences, and to purchaſe an Innumerable Store of Bleſſings for me: I was, at that Time, Preſent to Thee; And Thou didſt Love me; And thy Love, from that very Hour, Called me In, unto Thee, to be United to Thee, and to Enter Into the *Freedom of thy Service*: Thy Nouriſhment and Growth, and All the drops of thy precious Blood, Secreted In thy Veins, were Offered to God, thine Eternal Father, for me: Every Moment of thy Life Renew'd, afreſh, and Produced, In Thee, freſh Deſires to Suffer, ſtill on, for my Salvation.

What Couldſt Thou have done more for me, O my Saviour! If I had been Thy Chiefeſt Good as Thou art Mine! I Adore thy Boundleſs Love! So *Univerſal*, and So Particular, In Every Reſpect; So Primitive and So Modern; So Conſtant, and So Renewing; 'tis Impoſſible for Words to Expreſs my Senſe of thy Stupendous Goodneſs! And All that I can do is to Stand In Amaze; In Admiration, and Silence, In the Contemplation and Idea's of it.

VII. How? Doſt Thou Come to Unite thy Self to Me, Lord! To be Sacrific'd and Offer'd up for My Sake? Let me preſume to Ask, If thou doſt Conſider, who Thou Art! And what a Creature I am! Art thou not Blinded by the Exceſs of thy Love! Is it Me! Then, This Wretched Creature, that Thou Loveſt! And Searcheſt after! O Thou *Boundleſs Goodneſs*! O Thou *Immenſe Love!* Come, Bleſſed Lord! Work In me what Thou art Acting In thy Self! And Since Love is the Only Rule of thy Conduct, Let the Same Model, alſo, be the Management of Mine: Canſt Thou be Indebted to me for The Weak and Lukewarm diſpoſition that is In me, to Love Thee, with Tenderneſs, and to Live to no Other Purpoſe but to Serve Thee! Alaſs! I can Do *Nothing*, In Compare, to the Regard I ow Thee. If I am Ignorant how to be firſt with Thee In Love! Yet at Leaſt, Let me be the Next; And, Let me Anſwer, In the Poor Degree of Return which my Narrow Capacity will Allow, the Infinite Exceſs of Thine! For Without Thee I cannot do any thing, O Divine Energy of Love! And my Very Deſires, towards Thee, are, Themſelves, *The Operation of thy Goodneſs.*

Take from me, O Lord, Every Thing that can Eſtrange me from Thee! Break down this *Wall of Separation* that is Between us; And Grant that This Divine Flame, which Draws Thee to me, may Root, out of me, Every thing that is Diſpleaſing to Thee! Do Thou Regulate and New-form my Deſires, my Hopes, my Strength, my whole Soul, and Body, and All my Actions according to thy moſt Holy will! Thou, Only, O Lord! doſt Know

me

me Truly, Thou only Seeſt the Extent of my Miſery, as Thou only art my Relief and my Cure! Behold me In Thy Preſence O my God! Thou Knoweſt That which I deſire, And with what Ardour, and what Indifference I do purſue it; what I owe Thee, and The Want I have of thy Mercy and Compaſſion. I am thy Creature, O my God! And thou Hateſt Nothing that Thou haſt Made; Let thy Love Plead In my Behalf! Behold me Proſtrate at thy Feet Breathing, from the Deep of my Soul, and my whole Strength, after the Felicity of Poſſeſſing Thee! When wilt Thou Inſpire me with thy Celeſtial Fire, O my Saviour! My Life! And my Moſt Amiable Redeemer!

WHO can Ever be able to Comprehend, Moſt Holy Mother of God! The Graces Thou haſt Received During the Nine Months of thy Gravitation! Here it is again, that My Tongue muſt be Silent, Incapable to Expreſs the Amazing Idea's of my Soul! Impart this Lord to me whom Thou doſt ſo fully Poſſeſs! Vouchſafe to Give me Him, O Thou Miſtreſs of My Life! Let me Share In Him, Thou Fountain of my Hope! I can Wiſh for, I can ask Thee Nothing Better! And Thou Knoweſt, that I deſire Nothing Elſe but Him! Help me to a Heart Flaming after Him! Such a Clean Heart as ſhall be pure Enough to Receive Him! And ſo Conſtantly and Steadily, fix'd and United to Him, that it ſhall Never loſe Him. O ye Bleſſed Spirits, Whoſe Felicity and Joy Conſiſts In Adoring Him, for ever, and In the Fruition of His Everlaſting Love! Let me Share with You In the Happineſs and Bliſs that You are Ever Triumphing and Rejoycing in, Since I alſo am *Beloved* of My Divine Saviour, who Lives and Reigns In You, World without End. *Amen.*

Another

Another

Divine Contemplation

On The Moment of our Bleſſed Saviour's Incarnation.

1. I Adore Thee O Word Incarnate! O Son of The Living God! I Adore Thee O Thou True God! who art Cloathed with my Fleſh, and Subject to my Miſeries! Thou Art, Then, Come, O *Thou Deſire of All Nations!* Thou Saviour of my Soul! The Very Life, The only Help, and Refuge of Sinners! Let Heaven No Longer Glory In this, that Only, THERE Thou Haſt *Thy Dwelling Place*, Since Thou art Become The Companion of my Exile! Let No Creature, However Excellent and Noble in its Extract now diſpiſe me; For, In ſhort, I do not Adore Even the Angels of God, No! But The Angels, Themſelves, Adore Man! Thy Long Wiſh'd for Hour, Is Come! O *Fountain of Living Water!* O Thou Swelling River of Mercy! And Thou art going to Over-Flow the World with the Treaſures of Heaven! Thou forgetteſt Our Tranſgreſſions; And Layeſt the Burden of Our Miſerys upon Thy Self! Thou art Come, O Thou Bridegroom of Our Souls! And thou Appeareſt full of Grace and Truth! But Oh! What is This Grace? And with what Truths

Truths doſt Thou Come Into the World? what Leſs than to perform All that Thou Haſt Promiſed, O my God! At that time when the World was leaſt Worthy of it; When Wickedneſs had Spread its Dominion Over the Earth; And All Nature was Corrupt; And Thou hadſt the Greateſt Reaſon to Abhor Mankind; Then it was that Thou didſt ſhew thy Truth to the World; That Thou Didſt Give thy Self to us, that Thou didſt Come to *Seek, and to Save that which was loſt*; To Succour, and Relieve us, with thy Preſence; and didſt make Thy Self, In All things, *like unto us*: There is None but Thy Self, Alone; of Such Veracity and Truth, in Every Thing; For Thou never faileſt to Perform thy Promiſes, In the time Appointed for their Accompliſhment.

At That Time, when Thou Seemeſt far from us, Thou art Near at Hand; And Thou doſt make us Senſable of Thy Approach, Ever Accompanied with Grace and Mercy: For Thou Bringeſt thy Treaſures with Thee; Salvation and Life, and Plenty, Peace, and Honour, and the True Happineſs of Soules Which *Thou Cameſt to Seek*, and to Save the World! No; Bleſſed Lord! Thou art not Come Empty; Thou doſt not Leave thy Treaſures In Heaven; Thou haſt Brought down thy Riches with Thee; Thou Looſeſt nothing of thy Self, by taking my Nature upon Thee; And I Ought not to keep my Self at the Greater diſtance from Thee for fear of thy Majeſty, and Glory; Since I Behold Thee Incompaſſed with my Miſeries! I Embrace Thee, therefore, O my God! And I Love Thee! Becauſe Thou art my Bliſs, The Fountain of my Happineſs,

The

The Companion of my Pilgrimage, The Repoſe of my Mind, my Joy, my Glory, and my Salvation!

II. O How Rich I am In the Poſſeſſion of Thee! Inſomuch that the Angels, Themſelves, look with Envy upon my Condition, at this time, Becauſe I have, In thine Incarnation, An Honour which THEY HAVE NOT; For God has taken Into Himſelf my Human Nature; And, not That of the Angels; Adore Him, O ye Bleſſed Spirits, Who is my Supreme Good, and Yours too! O Thou moſt Divine, Love! How Almighty is thy Power! I do not Know So much how to Tranſgreſs thy Laws and Sin againſt Thee, But Thou Canſt yet Pardon more and forgive me over and above! And the Utmoſt of my Ingratitude cannot diminiſh thy Merciful Inclination to do me Good! Tho' I forſake Thee, I do not loſe Thee; When I Fly from Thee, Thou Still doſt follow me! When I Eſtrange my Self, and Keep me at a Greater Diſtance from thee, Thou drawſt the Nearer to me; And Bindeſt me with the Chains of thy Love, by Cloathing Thy Self with the Poverty of my Fleſh: Thou Giveſt thy Self up, Entirely, to me; Thou Blendſt thy Self, Into my Soul, after Such a Manner that I cannot Separate my Self from Thee, Nor loſe Thee without looſing my Self, Since Thou art Become the Same Fleſh and Blood with me.

I Plainly See, O Lord, that it is Love which Thou haſt put on, and Inveſted Thyſelf withall, for my Sake; And It is Love that Thou Requireſt In Return: Thou art Come, among us, Burning with This Divine Fire, to the End that we ſhould be Kindled therewith, and

Never

Never Set on Fire, by any Other Flame: Thou Diffuſeſt it Every Where; Even to Thoſe who Perish; Not that They do not feel its Warmth, but Becauſe They Extinguiſh Theſe Flames of Life which Thou, Breatheſt Into them, by Shutting up their Hearts. I Open Mine, O Lord, to Thee; I Give it up All, and Entirely, to Thy Love; And it is the Greateſt of my Requeſts that it may be Conſumed There! How Unhappy am I that I have not, likewiſe, A Love that's Boundleſs to Preſent Thee with, In Return for Thine, that has no Termination! True, O Lord! Thou art An Infinite Bliſs! And my Love has but a Poor, Narrow Compaſs! But, Since Thou art Incorporate, and wholly Mine, I Devote my Soul to Thee from thy Self.

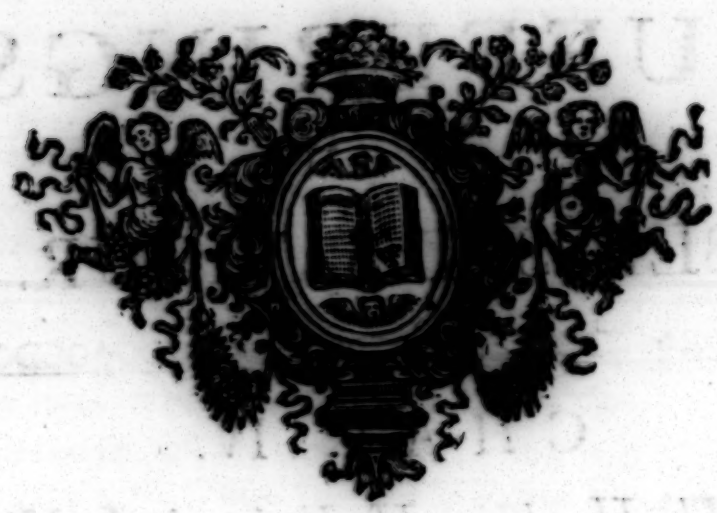
III. O That I had Always Loved Thee! That, My Heart had been, ever, Enflamed with thy Love! O That Thou hadſt been, Ever, The only Sovereign and Maſter There! That I had Never been Guilty of the Leaſt Offence that Might have Driven me away from Thee! But tho' Human Nature is Under a State of Perfection In Thee, and moſt Pure, and full of Grace; yet, That Bleſſed Nature is my Nature, as Miſerable a Creature as I am! It Cannot be, In Thee, Either Stain'd with Guilt, or Tainted, as it is In me! But, on the Contrary, by thy Participation of it, It is Become the Inſtrument of my Felicity! And Whilſt I loſe my Self In that, thou wilt Save me by the very Means of it! Save me, then, O Thou, my True Beatitude! Refine me, O Thou moſt pure Brightneſs! Support me, O Thou Divine Omni-

Omnipotence! Since Thou haſt been pleas'd to Subject thy Self to all the Calamities of my Temporal Life and Condition, Give me! Let me Partake of, Thine *Eternal One*; Vouchſafe me a Part In thy Graces, of which thou art ſo Infinitely full, that They might be Shed upon me! Let The Ineffable Mercy and Love, which Prevail'd upon Thee to take Our Nature, Prevaile with Thee, alſo, to have Compaſſion of that Corrupt Nature which is, So Weak and So full of Corruption In me.

Thou art Willing to Shew, O my God! That All thou doſt, among Men, It is All, as if it were for Thy Self; Since Thou art Become like to them! Heal, then, my Wounds, as if they were thine Own! Guide me, Govern me, and Aſſiſt me; And Make me Clean, Since I am Thine; And, for the Honour of that Human-Nature, which Thou haſt taken Upon Thee, Thou wouldſt that all Mankind ſhould be Pure, and Holy, Rich and Happy In thy Fruition. I am Thine, O Lord! By RIGHT and PURCHASE; And, from the Bottom of my Soul, I Wiſh, and Long, to Become Thine IN LOVE alſo. Thou Seeſt me at thy Feet, O Lord! And I Embrace them Cloſe; And will never Quit them! For Thou art ALL Mine! I Devote my Self, without Reſerve, to thy Will, For, Thou haſt Conquer'd, and art in Poſſeſſion, of my Soul, by thy Love! O Divine Benignity! Create Such An Alteration, and Such a thorough Change In me, That Thou mayſt Say alſo to me, Thou, Poor, Helpleſs Creature! Art all Mine! O that I might but See theſe two

Bleſſings

Bleſſings Accompliſh'd! That I were, All, In Thee, as Thou art All In All In Me! But There is None Except Thy Self, O Celeſtial Flame! Who can do This, who can Work This Miracle; Thou ouly art He that Can Kindle me, Enflame me, and Transform me Into thy Self.



THE

Fourth Instance

OF THE

SUFFERINGS

OF OUR

BLESSED SAVIOUR.

CHAP. IV.

In The Hardships He Endured, In His own Body upon His Nativity.

I. THE Hour Being Come, In which The INCARNATE WORD Should be Born of a Virgin, and make His Appearance In the World; The Transport of his joy was So Great, that The Prophet

Prophet Compares it to the firſt *Springs* that A Giant Makes upon any Great deſign: *He* * *Leap'd*, Says He (In the Womb,) *Like a Giant when He begins his Courſe.* Being Come, Into the World, and Finding the Wretched Creatures There (whom he came to Save) more Frozen In their Indifferency and Unconcern for their Own Welfare, than by the Severity of the Seaſon, Which was the Mid of Winter, He Summon'd The *Angels of Heaven* to Congratulate His Happy Advent: The Other Creatures, Even the moſt Inſenſible Part of the Creation, would not have fail'd to bear a Part, after their Manner, In this Univerſal Call, to Joy, had they been allow'd to do it; The Inanimate Part of the World, had Uttered Exultation at This *Myſterious Nativity*, as They Expreſs'd Horror at His Death; But, As, Our Bleſſed Saviour's Purpoſe Was to Diffuſe, over the World, a Spirit Entirely Celeſtial, and Divine; The infinite Wiſdom Decreed that He ſhould make His firſt Appearance, In a Scene quite Oppoſite to the Vain, Theatrical ſhews of this World: And, Becauſe He came to Condemn Thoſe Pomps, and Gaudy Pageantries It is too full of, He would not Permit Any Other Creature to Uſher In, or Celebrate His Birth, But the Celeſtial Choir, who are Ever Singing their HOSANNA's and HALLELUJAH's † *Before the Throne, And To The Lamb for ever and Ever!* The Bleſſed Virgin, Alone, Received Her Creator, And Adored Him, for Her Self, And, In the Behalf of All the World, for whoſe Sake He was Come: For She Alone, was Capable to Perform This Devotion; And, to Supply the

* Pſ. 19. 5.

† Rev. 5. 13.

Defects and Unworthiness of All Human Nature.

II. So that, when She found Her Time was Come, Not by Any Birth-pains, after the Manner of Women, But by the Greater *Bearings* of her Love, And the Longing she had to see, before her Eyes, And to Embrace within her Arms the Only Begotten Son of God, and Her Son; She went to *Bethlehem*, with *Joseph* Her Spouse, In Obedience to the Emperor's Edict, And to pay the Tax, for her Self and The Infant, According to the Custom: This was a little Village where there was A Great Concourse of People, met together, at that time, from All Parts of the World; Because, All those who were of the *Line of David* were Oblig'd to Appear There: And, therefore, The Blessed Virgin could not find Any Inn, or other House to Lodge in; So that she was forc'd to take up in a Stable, that was Open, and Expos'd, to all Weather: And This she did with a Prudence, Peculiar to Her Self, Being In all things *Inspir'd and Guided by the Holy Ghost*. Tho' she found the Time of her Delivery Coming on, And, upon that Account, might have put off Her Departure from *Nazareth*, Yet, for all that, she did Go, to Seek out the Place, where she knew that This Son Of God, Made Man, whom she carried In her Womb, had Determined to be Born; And, As a faithful Servant, (which Condition she Esteem'd No less than that of his Mother,) she chose Rather to Pursue her Son's Will, than her own pleasure, About Bringing Him Into the World, In a Place so very Unworthy A Personage of So High A Majesty.

So

So that, withdrawing Her Self Into a Corner of the Stable, All Expoſed to the Cold, and Winds; She fell Into a Profound Contemplation: When, Behold! The INCARNATE WORD, of His Own proper Energy, And the Refined Nature of his Glorious Body, without the Leaſt Injury to her Virgin-Purity, Enters Into the World, at Midnight, In a Small Body, But moſt Raviſhingly Beautiful, And was laid upon the Straw, by the hands of his Holy Mother: And, At that Moment, ſhe Perceiv'd her Breaſts were fill'd with Celeſtial Milk; Upon which, ſhe Proſtrated her Self, on the Ground, In a moſt Humble Manner, And Worſhip'd the SON OF GOD, And HER SON: Then, ſhe took Him, Into her Arms, Bound Him up, In Swadling-Cloaths, Gave Him the Breaſt, And Remain'd, for a Conſiderable time, Wrapt up, Her Self, in Admiration and Silence: And Here, I muſt Leave it to the Thoughts of the Holy and Devout Reader, to Imagine, THAT, which Words Cannot Expreſs; And, I will not Undertake to Repreſent, Here, what Idea's Poſſeſs'd the Mind of the Bleſſed Virgin, at that time, or the Yearnings of her Heart towards her Son. The Bleſſed Angels, alſo, Bare their Part, at this Solemnity, by their Adorations; Acknowledging Him as THEIR LORD; Calling even the Shepherds alſo, In their Triumphant Hallelujah's, In which they prais'd God, Saying, * *Glory to God In the Higheſt, On Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men.* 2.

Which Song of the Bleſſed Angels is very Expreſſive, In Several Reſpects; And of Great Comfort to us.

iii.

* St. Luke

IV. For, In the firſt Place, they Inform us, that the War which had been kindled and Proclaimed between God and Man, on Account of Sin, was, at laſt, happily at an End; And That The Peace which was, Then, newly *Commenc'd*, was *Eſtabliſh'd*, for Ever, by the Birth of Chriſt, And has Given us, from Henceforward, a free Acceſs to God, Under A Certain Aſſurance, of his GOOD WILL, upon the Terms, of our Obedience, And ſincere Devotion and Love to Him.

Secondly, That We have, now, A Subterfuge to Flee to; Under which, we are Sure to be Shelter'd from the Juſtice and the Wrath of God, by the Protection of the INCARNATE WORD; Foraſmuch as The *Divine Goodneſs* finds In Him MERIT, more than Sufficient, to Purchaſe our Pardon, And Reconciliation, And to Introduce us Into the Friendſhip and Favour of God, who will Require no more of us than our *Obedience* and *Good Will:* That is; This Peace is the Fruit of Gods Proper Liberality and Bounty towards Mankind.

Thirdly, Theſe words have, Yet, Another ſenſe, very Correſpondent to the Love that God has Witneſs'd to us, In this Myſtery: Sinners are Call'd, In the Holy Scripture, The CHILDREN of WRATH, of PERDITION, and DEATH, Becauſe they are Slaves to Sin; But we are Become, by means of Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the ADOPTIVE CHILDREN OF GOD; Since This Happineſs does not Proceed from Any *Merit* of our own; But, from the Love, and Good will, which God Teſtifies unto us, In Giving us his Son, we are Called, by the Angels, The Men, or CHILDREN of GOOD WILL; That is, Of the DIVINE WILL,

WILL, which is, Always, Exerting it Self In *Doing Good*; And, In this Reſpect it is, that The Bleſſed Angels Sang This Peace, to the Sons of this Fatherly Compaſſion and Good Will, which is The *Source* and *Fountain* from whence all our Bleſſings come.

V. But we muſt not Suffer theſe *Triumphal Songs*, of the *Bleſſed Angels*, And All the other Inſtances and Expreſſions, of their Joy, to take our minds off, from the Miſeries, our Bleſſed Saviour Underwent, from that time, In his Human Capacity; Since, In the midſt of This, their Divine Exultation, His thoughts were ſtill fix'd on Our Salvation! He might, as well, Had He been ſo pleaſed, have been Array'd In Purple, at his Nativity; But, He Choſe, Rather, to be Laid in a Truſs of Sraw upon the Ground, and to meet with nothing better than the Common Litter, which was uſed for the Beaſts in the Stable! Thus it was, that He began to Suffer, for us, from the firſt moment of His Appearance In the World! And to fullfil the Prediction of the Royal Prophet, concerning Him, where 'tis ſaid, He ſhould be as *A * Worm, and no man, a Reproach of Men, and Deſpiſed of the People.* * Pſ. 22. 6.

VI. We muſt not Impute This Circumſtance of his Nativity, In being Uſher'd, Into the World, under ſo mean a State, Either to his Weakneſs, or his Infancy; Since, what He underwent, In this Caſe, was not owing to the Helpleſſneſs of that Condition, But Becauſe He would have it ſo; And from A Particular Determination of his Providence: For, Being, Himſelf, LORD of the CREATION, He had Decreed, That, At His Birth, *The Scepter ſhould* go OUT of THE

House Of David, from, whom He Deſcended, In a Direct and Right Line, by the Holy Virgin his Mother, To the End, that ſhe might be In a very Poor Condition, at that time; That the *Romans* ſhould be then Governours of *Judea*; That *Auguſtus* ſhould make a Liſt of his Subjects; that Thoſe which were of the Houſe of *David* ſhould be Obliged to Go to *Bethlehem*; That the Holy Virgin His Mother ſhould be at that time, Near her Delivery; And, That ſhe ſhould be Able to get no better Place to Betake her ſelf to, than a Stable: This ſhews us Plainly How different the Views of Providence are, to the Imaginations of Worldly Men; All whoſe ways He Condemned under Every Circumſtance of His Birth; The ſmall Eſteem we ought to have of theſe Temporal things, which we purſue with ſo much Eagerneſs and Deſire; And The Severities with which we Ought to Mortifie Our Fleſh: For, If the Bleſſed Jeſus uſed His with ſo much Rigour, which was ſo Immaculately Pure, and Innocent, and ſo perfectly Reſigned to Gods Will, what contempt and ſlight ought we to have for Ours, which is a *Body of Sin*; And a Mortal Enemy to our Own Happineſs and Quiet.

It was, Therefore, for Our Inſtruction, that His Precious Body, Sacred and Tender as it was, was laid upon the Ground upon a Wiſp of Straw; Becauſe He Knew of how Great Danger the Carnal Deſires of the Fleſh, And The falſe Peace which theſe Irregular Luſts Suggeſt Are, In Reſpect to Our Salvation, And, As They Render All the Labours which our Bleſſed Saviour underwent for Our Sakes, and

the

the Bleſſings of his Meritorious Works for us, Fruitleſs and Abortive: And Certainly, If Self-Love, Abſtracted from the Weakneſs of the Carnal Nature, Occaſion'd ſuch great Confuſions even In Heaven Amongſt the Angels of God; And cauſed ſo great A Number of Them, To be Thrown Down Precipitate, Into Hell; what will It not Produce, of Miſery and Damnation, to Creatures made out of the Duſt, who Abandon, and Give up themſelves, to their Irregular Luſts and Appetites! It was This Conſideration that made the * *Holy Father* Complain, In bitter Groans and Lamentation: * St. Bern. Ep. 2.

" *Alas*! Says He, *we ſhall not wholly be delivered*
" *from This* Self-Love *untill we come to Heaven*;
" *We have A Tincture, of it, which we ſhall carry*
" *About us, In our own Natural Propenſity, till we*
" *Come There! But Then, we ſhall be ſo full of the*
" *Fruition of God, that We ſhall loſe All the Ma-*
" *lignity with which It Poiſons us, So long as we*
" *Live the Subjects of Human Frailty*: Therefore, He that does not Reſolve to ſtruggle with This Malignity, In this Life; And Look upon it as an Enemy, ſo much the more formidable, As, it, the more Enticingly, Sooths our Natural Inclinations, Ought not ſo much as to Expect, the Salvation of his Soul.

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon Our Bleſſed Saviour's Nativity.

I. 'TIS, At this very Moment, O moſt Divine Jeſus! That I ought to be wholly Enflam'd with the Fire of thy Love! Enlighten my Mind with There Eternal Brightneſs! Contract the Multiplicity of my Thoughts! Recollect All my Interiour Senſes; Diſpel All the Miſts and Darkneſs of my Soul, that I may be Able to Behold Thee! To Comprehend Thee! To Love Thee! To Receive Thee! And to Embrace Thee with A Heart that's Pure, and clean, and Worthy of Thee! How Beautiful Art Thou! O Moſt Amiable Spouſe! How Rich! And what Treaſures haſt thou Brought us, By Thy Nativity! Thine Entrance Into A World, of Miſery and Sorrow, How full is It of *Good will* and Bounty to Mankind! How, Art Thou to be, for Ever, Bleſſed and Praiſed! O Moſt High God! Who haſt Deſcended, from Thine Own Moſt Exalted State (In which Thou Art, Eternally, to be Adored, As LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH,) to take upon Thee the *Form of a Servant*. Come, Thou God of My Salvation! Haſten to me My Glory! Come; Thou Joy, Thou Deſire, and Happineſs of thy Helpleſs Creature! I Adore Thee In The Subſtance of my

my Fleſh! I Adore That Body, That Soul, That Divinity, That Raviſhing Love, and Inexpreſſible Mercy, with which thou Art Enrobed, In Thine Advent to us! Thou art Come Into a Deſert Wilderneſs, Barren of All Product, But Thorns and Thiſtles! Thou Art In the Midſt of A Perverſe Generation; Encompaſſed with A World of Impure Souls; And Environ'd with mean Shepherds! But Thou haſt Made This Deſert An Heaven, by Thy Preſence; And turn'd A Stable Into A Manſion of Glory! The Powers of Heaven Deſcend to Pay Thee Divine Homage and Adoration upon Earth! Our Exile, from the Delightful *Eden*, Now, is Chang'd Into a More Glorious and Pleaſant Region; And We Are Charm'd with the Joyous Acclamations of thoſe Bleſſed Beings of the Upper World, In this Valley of Tears, This Abode of Sorrow! For Every Place is Heaven, Where thy Preſence is, who Art, to Every Faithful, and Devout Soul, The Utmoſt of All Spiritual Felicity! To Thee, O Lord, All things are Pure; All Things are Holy; All Things are Peace; All Things are Dear, and Delightful; All Things are Lovely; And, All for Ever Happy!

If Thou art Seeking us, O my God! When We are Careleſs and Unmindful of thee! And, of Thy Good Pleaſure, Viſiteſt our Melancholy Priſon, without any Invitation, what is It that Thou wilt Deny to Communicate of Thy Self, to Him, who Longs and Wiſhes for thy Preſence! Who, by his Sigh's and Groans, Breaths after Thee! Invites and Calls Thee That Way! I make my Humble Suite to Thee, I Invite thee, Moſt Dear Saviour! With the utmoſt Earneſtneſs! II.

Earneſtneſs! Come, Bleſſed Lord! Come in! And Be Born, In my Soul! Repleniſh It with thy Brightneſs! Beſtow upon it Thy Peace for Its *Good will!* For, Alaſs! Thou wilt find nothing more, No *Good Work* in us! We are So Naked and Deſtitute of All that's Good, that we can Pretend to Nothing more than a *Good Thought*. And, Our Very Good Deſires muſt Come from Thee! Thou Reſerveſt to Thy Self All the Pains and Labours; And, It is Sufficient that thou findeſt, In us, *A Good Inclination*, for Thee to Sanctifie and Supply with Good, out of thy Self, and to Confer thy Grace upon it, Whereby It may be Enabled to Accompliſh, and Effect, that which It Deſires.

If there be any Good in me, It is Becauſe I am Thy Workmanſhip; And the Produce, of thy Paternal Bounty, which is *An Inexhauſtibe Fountain of All Good*: And Thou doſt only Require of me A Good Will, that Thou mayſt Impart to me The Bleſſings Thou Deſigneſt for me: I Tender It to Thee, O Lord! And I offer Thee, Nothing but what I have Received from Thy Self; For It is Thou who haſt Beſtow'd It on me! And It is from thy Bounteous Hand that I have ſo Much as the deſire, to Love Thee, And to Enjoy Thee; It is All, Entirely, from thy Self. Make up what is wanting, O Thou Supreme Perfection! What is Deficient, In the Weakneſs and Imperfection of My Will! For, alaſs! Who am I, of my Self! And what can I have of Good In me without thy Communication! Animate, This Spark of Love, by thy Inſpiration, which thou haſt Imparted to me, O Divine Spirit! Let it Riſe

Into

Into a Flame, where I may be Entirely Swallow'd up and So *Conſumed*.

How Very Different art Thou from what thou Appeareſt to be, O Thou Divine Infant! Human Sight is not Penetrating, Enough, to Diſcover Thee, Otherwiſe than In thy Little, Weak, and Tender Body; Cold as the very Ice; All In Tears; And Wanting the Common Neceſſarys of Life! Couchant upon the Ground, Like the Beaſts In the Stable; And, as the Off-ſcouring of the Earth! When, At the Same time, Thou art The SON of the ETERNAL FATHER! *The* * *Brightneſs of His Glory*; *And* * *The Expreſs Image of his Perſon*; The Infinite, Almighty God; The Treaſure of Heavenly Riches; The Joy of Souls In Bliſs; The Delight and Raviſhment of Thoſe that Love Thee; The Bliſs of Thoſe who deſire Thee; And The Everlaſting Reſt of Thoſe who Enjoy Thee! How Great, and How Little Art Thou, At the ſame Time! Thou Infant, and Thou God! Thou haſt Cloathed Thy Self In this Condition, that thou Mighteſt the more Eaſily Gain The Tenderneſs of Our Nature! Thou Rejecteſt No Body; Thou wert Born in a Place Altogether Expos'd, and Open, That Every Diſtreſſed Soul, All Thoſe that are *Weary and Heavy Laden*, Might Come, And have free Acceſs Unto Thee! And Thou Permitteſt All, even the moſt forlorn and Deſtitute, to Careſs Thee with their Love; And to Devote Themſelves unto Thee! Come then Into my Arms, O Heaven-Born Infant, That, In Embracing Thee, I may Enfold my God! And whilſt I hold Thee faſt, I may Rejoyce In my *Incomprehenſible*, and my *Supreme Good*.

III.

* Heb. 1. 3.

Thou

Thou Shroudeſt thy Majeſty, O Glorious God, that Mankind may draw near to Thee, without Fear; And Converſe, Freely, with Thee! For, who ſhall Preſume, to Preſent himſelf before Thee, Unleſs thy Condeſcending Goodneſs, ſhall Vouchſafe, to Grant him Acceſs That way! Take thy Reſidence then In my Soul, Thou Child of Heaven! And Gratifie the Deſire It has to Enjoy Thee! O, Take up thy Stay, and Dwell There! Let it be thy Reſting Place, to Repoſe In me! Let me Behold the Comlineſs of thy Beauty! Mollifie and Soften the Hardneſs of my Obdurate Heart, by thy Sweetneſs, and The Innocence of The LAMB OF GOD! And Change it, All, Entirely Into thy Love; That I may Never more Separate my ſelf from thee! That my Heart may Grow up with thee! That It may Dilate, and Expand it ſelf; And Increaſe In the Strength of *an Entire* Perfection, and true Devotion, To Love thee with Conſtancy, to Serve Thee with Fidelity, And to Do all Things according to Thy holy will.

IV. O Adorable Saviour! Thou Divine WORD! Eternal Wiſdom! If thou Comeſt to Seek and to Search after Mankind, Why art thou Not Born after the Same manner with them? And among them! Why art Thou Born In a Stable! Why Didſt thou not, at leaſt, take up a Lodging among Men! Why didſt Thou uſe thy Body So Inhumanly! This was done Neither by Chance; nor, Out of that Infant-Weakneſs which Thou alſo took'ſt upon Thee! For, Thou Art WISDOM UNCREATE! And Upholdeſt the Univerſal World, by Thine own Almighty Powre! Thou art Born, Thus, Becauſe It is thy will to be

be ſo; And, the Treatment, Thou doſt Undergo, Is the Work of thine Own Choice! But why, Lord! Shouldſt Thou make This thy Choice! This ſo Severe and Rigorous a Treatment! Why ſuch Hardſhip and ſo Harſh uſage for ſo Innocent and Immaculate a Body! 'Tis, that Thou mightſt know my Infirmities, And Becauſe Thou wouldſt be the Only, and True Remedy to Cure them! Thou knoweſt that my Body and my Fleſh are the moſt Cruel of Mine Enemies; And that the *Law, of my Members*, Rebells, In me, without Ceaſing, againſt the *Law of the Sirit*; And Renders All the Effects of thy Mercy Fruitleſs in me! Thou Treateſt Thy Fleſh, Tho' it is Innocence and Purity it ſelf, and the Inſtrument of Infinite Good to me, with That Mortification and Severity as I ought to ſhew to mine: How Blind were I, ſhould I not apprehend what Thou Teacheſt me, by This Conduct! How Wretched a Creature ſhould I be, were I to ſee This, and not Bluſh, and be Aſhamed to Indulge my own Carnal Appetite, and to Spare This Enemy to my Salvation, ſo, as to Prefer Its Intereſts before thine; And to loſe thee, for the Gratification of its Luſts, and for want of keeping it under a due Correction and Submiſſion!

O Thou Light of my Heart! Thou Lord! And *Perfect Image* of the *Eternal Truth*, In Every Reſpect! Enlighten me that I may ſee, Clearly, how I ought to manage This Body of mine! Grant, alſo, that the ſame Love, which Brought upon thee this Exceſs of Sufferings, for my Inſtruction and Cure; May Create In me a New Spirit, that I may Learn to Hate and

and Abhor this Sinful Fleſh, as much as I have Loved it, and Indulg'd it in its Corruptions!

But this Body, O my Lord! Is A Part of my Very Being! It Goes along with me; It Bears me Company wherever I am; It Enters with me Into the very Place of my Devotion when I am Performing the Offices of my Religion, and In thy Service! It will needs take up the firſt Place There too; And I am Remiſs Enough, to Condeſcend to its Deſires! What ſhall I do, O my God! How ſhall I be able to Support my Soul, and to Bear up, under the weight of So Great Miſeries, and againſt This *Law of My Fleſh*, that, Always, Sets up it Self, ſo In Oppoſition to *That* of Thy Commandments! There is None but Thy Self, O Thou Heavenly Phyſician! In whom I can find A Remedy for my Wants; And it was to Give me This, that Thou Waſt Born, and that Thou haſt ever Since us'd Thy Self, with So much Harſhneſs and Severity. O Heal, then, the Corruption of my Heart, by the Purity of thine Own; And, By the Strength of thy Bleſſed Spirit, Do Thou Support the Weakneſs of my Soul! The Place of thy Nativity Could not be Altered by thy Preſence; But it Continu'd to be a Stable Still, And Thou didſt not Change the Nature of it; But, O Lord! Thou canſt Change and Moliſie the Hardneſs of my Heart, by thy Preſence; Thou canſt Correct the Bent of my Irregular Appetites; And Raiſe my Sordid deſires from the Earth to Heaven! Come away, then, from thy Stable; And make thy Abode in me! Thou Canſt Enlighten me, Adhere to me, and Change me!

Come,

Come, then, O my God! That I may know Thee! That I may Adore Thee! That I may Embrace thee! And that I may Abhor my Self out of Love of Thee! Come, then, And Enter Into my Soul! And I ſhall be Humbled, And, In Confuſion for My own Guilt, by thy Preſence; And thou ſhalt be Glorified by my Abaſement: Thou ſhalt Teach me thy Truth, and Give me of thy Strength to Overcome my Adverſary's; To Deſtroy In me, The *Old Man*, that the Spirit of The *Living God* may find a Place, There, and Live, and Reign in my Soul: Be Thou, for ever, Preſent to my Eyes, O Divine Saviour! Eſtabliſh thy Manſion In my Heart! And, Grant that I may be So Charm'd and Raviſh'd with thy Moſt Amiable Sweetneſs, that I may Entirely Loſe All Taſt, All Senſe of Worldly Pleaſure.

'Tis the Moſt fatal Miſery, of my Soul, that I purſue the Dictates of Senſe, In Oppoſition to Thy Will! Thou knoweſt, O Lord! My Frailty, And the poor Ability, That's In me, to Reſiſt the Temptations of Offence againſt Thee; Nothing but thy Omnipotent Arm can fortifie and Defend me againſt my Self, that is againſt the Cravings of my own Impetuous Deſires and Inclinations: I Proſtrate my Self, at thy Feet! I Preſent my Self before thy Mercy Seat, with all my Wounds and Sores, and the Burden of All my Miſeries upon me! I would fain Perform all that Thou Requireſt of me, And I Deſire Nothing more, than to fullfil thy moſt Holy will, In All things that Thou Wouldſt have done! But my Rebellious Luſts Contradict my Deſire of Obedience to Thee, my God! Do Thou, therefore, Correct, And Chaſten

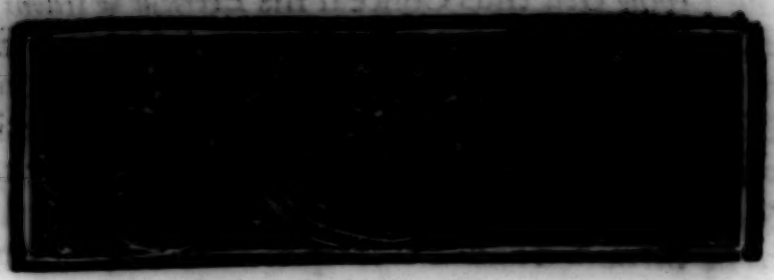
This

This unruly Enemy my Fleſh; Mortifie it, and make it Feel the Almighty Influence of thy moſt Bleſſed Spirit.

☞ O Moſt Holy, Ever-Virgin Mother! Let my Miſeries Plead, with Thee, In my Behalf! Vouchſafe me Thy Helping Hand to Break and Soften This Rock, This Obdurate Heart within me, And to Deſtroy theſe Rebellious Contradictions of my Fleſh! That it may be Humbled and Brought Low, Into an Entire Submiſſion and Obedience to This Lord of my Life; And that I may not Loſe the Fruit of his moſt Painful Labours for my Soul! Do Thou Intercede for me with My Divine Saviour, that I may Obtain his Grace to Enable me to Vanquiſh my Self, and Become Obedient to his Will; To Abhor my Sinful Depravity, And to Love and Entirely Devote my Self to His Goodneſs! O ye Angels of Heaven! Ye moſt Pure and Glorified Spirits, who Triumph In Supreme Felicity, Bleſs and Adore, for Ever, The Saviour of my Soul! Give Him Your Ecchoes of Praiſe and Glory! Joyn, together In your Conſorts of *Hoſanna's*, and *Halleluiah's* of *Benediction to the Lamb*, for all the Benefits He has Beſtow'd upon me! Be you my Advocates, Before Him, Ye * *Who always Behold the Face of my Father which is In Heaven!* Plead for me, for Grace, and Strength againſt This *Load of my Fleſh*, that lies So Heavy upon my Soul, That the Burthen may be taken off; And that, Being *Subdued by the Spirit, In my Fleſh I may See God.* Amen.

* St. Mat. 18. 10.

THE



THE

Fifth Inſtance

OF THE

SUFFERINGS

OF

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

CHAP. V.

In the Tears which He Shed for Our Sins.

THE firſt Thing Our Saviour did, upon his Coming into the World, was to WEEP, according to the common manner of Infants, at their Birth: And this affords Matter of great Admiration; To ſee The *Son* of 1.

the *Living God* thus Conceal his *Eternal Wiſdom*; The *Word* INCOMPREHENSIBLE, who is the Energy of Exiſtence, it ſelf, and of all Production, to Couch in Silence, and to become, as it were, Unactive; The JOY OF THE HAPPY to *Shed Tears*; and the *Supreme, Sovereign Omnipotence* to be ſhrouded and wrapt up in Swadling Cloths, in the Arms of a Woman! As all theſe Appearances of His Impotence and Weakneſs, were deſign'd on no other Account but to expreſs his Exceeding Love to Men; They furniſh the Devout Soul, with a moſt Copious and Ample Subject for its Contemplation; Enough to make us ſtand Amaz'd and Aſtoniſhed, in Conſideration of ſuch Myſterious and Miraculous Condeſcention: For, the Reaſon why This Divine Infant ſhould *Weep*, at his Nativity, like the Reſt of the New-born, is far different from that of Cuſtom in human Nature: The Royal Prophet had foretold, of Him, that He ſhould be * *Conſumed by the Zeal of God's Houſe*, and for His Father's Glory, even ſo far as to take upon Himſelf, the Load, and Expiation of the Sins of the World: And the Senſe of This was ſo Pungent upon His Soul, even upon his firſt Entrance into the World, (to feel the Weight of All that Infinite and Numberleſs Generation of Sins, which the ETERNAL WISDOM, at that time, ſet, in a full View, before his Eyes) that he burſt into Tears, That very Moment, ſeeing what a Painful Life He was to Travel thro', and with what a bitter Death He ſhould conclude it. Now Theſe Tears, Shed for us Sinners, Conſidering the Dignity of His Perſon, were of Such An Efficacy Before God, *The Father*, Accord-

* Pſ. 69. 9.

According to the Witneſs of that Great * Apoſtle, *That They were Heard of Him, and Obtain'd his Favour for us, and Merited the Forgiveneſs of Our Sins.* * Heb. 5. 7.

For, whilſt Our Bleſſed Saviour, was ſo Entirely taken up with Our Miſeries; And his Bleſſed Soul, with All its Faculties and Powers, Remain'd United to the God-Head, whom He moſt Clearly Saw, His Sacred Cheeks were Bedewed with Tears; His Heart was Pierced with a moſt Quick and Lively Sorrow for All the Sins Committed from the beginning of the World, or that ſhould be, to the Conſummation of All Time and Ages.

II. As He has never Spar'd Himſelf, In any thing, when He was on the Wrack to Witneſs his Love; When the Earth was Soaked with his Blood, which came, from Him, as Drops of Sweat, In the Garden; It may Rationally be Suppos'd that He Sprinkled Every Place of his Devotion with his Tears. And that According to the Words of The Prophet, He † *Moiſtened his Couche Every Night with them*, And prepair'd Himſelf, by this Bath of Tears, for that Baptiſm of Blood which He So Vehemently Sigh'd after; But, tho' we may form an Idea of the habitual Courſe of theſe Precious Tears, He So Conſtantly Shed for us, yet, No Words Can Expreſs with how much Anguiſh, and Bitterneſs of Soul, They Diſtill'd from Him; As the Effects of A Grief ſo much the more Quick, and Exquiſite, as it was Inward and from the Deep of the Soul. † Pſ. 6. 6.

It is Impoſſible, for Any, Except thoſe who Actually Experience the Torments of a Wounded Spirit, to Conceive how Infinitely they Ex-

ceed the Utmoſt Pains and Torture that Can be Inflicted on the Body: The Characters which Affliction Impreſſes upon the Mind are Uſually the Reſult of that Conſciouſneſs which it Has of Evil: But it was In the Bleſſed Jeſus, only, to have a Perfect Intelligence and Idea of the Number and Enormity of thoſe Sins that He Wept for; And He only was Capable to have A True Senſe of the whole Weight of 'em: It is In this Meaning that the Holy Prophet Repreſents Him, Speaking to God His Father,

* Pſ. 66, 1, 2, &c. and Saying * *Have Pity on me, and Save Me, O God! For The Waters are Come In, even Unto my Soul; The Floods have Overflowed me; And I am Sunk Into the Depth of the Sea; I am Weary with the Strength of Crying; And Mine Eyes are Grown Weak, and fail, by the Torrent of my Tears; For*

† V. 9. † *The Zeale of thy Houſe hath Devoured me.*

III. When The Saints would Repreſent the Deformity of Sin, They Affirm that, Were a Man to Behold it In the Real Turpitude, and frightful Image of it, the Horrour, It would Create In him, were Enough to Coſt him his Life: It is Certainly true, that God has Opened this Scene to Some of his Servants; But, As He Always, has Compaſſion, to Spare their Weakneſs and Inſufficiency, He Diſcovers this Frightful Viſion to them, In This Strong View, but for a little Time, and with a moſt Powerful Infuſion of his moſt Holy Spirit Along with it: And, Altho' This Enlightning Grace is Diſpens'd to make them Clean, and Purifie the Soul; His Aſſiſting Spirit, Always, is at Hand, And Keeps Pace with Them, for their Support, and to Suſtain them: Neither Does He Diſcover It In its Full Terrors; But hides Some Part from Them

Them which They Could not Bear; And Inſpires them with A freſh Truſt, and Confidence In His mercy; which, yet, Engages Them In a More Ardent Love, and Stronger Zeal for His Service.

If Any One thinks This too Horrid An Invective Againſt Sin, Let him Caſt his Eyes on the Suffering Jeſus, and Conſider that He, who was the moſt true Judge of the Aggravation, and Guilt, of Our Tranſgreſſions, has not thought it too much to Purchaſe the Expiation of 'em at the Expeuce of his moſt Precious Blood; His Life; And All thoſe Ineſtimable Merits of his Death and Paſſion! This Very Idea of the Deformity of Sin, Was One Reaſon that Brought upon Him that fatal *Agony* and *Bloody-Sweat* He underwent, *In the Garden, upon the Mount of Olives.*

The Bleſſed Son of God, having therefore, taken Upon Him, to Satisfie, and make Attonement for the *Sins of the World*, of whoſe Numberleſs Multitude and Aggravations He had Such a Parfect Idea; It is Eaſy to Imagin, with what An Exquiſite Reſentment, and Bitterneſs of Heart He Lamented and Bewayl'd them: For tho' They were not his Own, but Others Sins that he Deplor'd; The Bitterneſs, of His Paſſion, was not, In the leaſt Abated, In Him, upon that Conſideration; Becauſe, thro' the Fervency of his Love, He Bare them as if They had been his Own; And, therefore, He was as Senſably Affected, with Them, As if He had Committed them, Himſelf; Beſides that He, not Only, Saw the Natural Conſequences of Sin, and what Diſorder and Confuſion It had IV.

Brought Into the World and among Mankind; But, what was Infinitely More Cutting to his Righteous Soul, The Injury and Offence, Thereby, Acted againſt Heaven, And The moſt Perfect and juſt God; And, This was what Made Him paſs his Life In One Continual Scene of, *Tears*, and *Sorrow*.

Altho' there may be Many Reaſons Given why We, All, Naturally, Come Into the World, with Tears, and Weeping; Particularly, As we are Born the *Children of Wrath*, And are Baniſh'd Into *a far Country*, Very Diſtant from Heaven, the Proper Reſidence of joy and Happineſs; And as we are Sent Into a State very Precarious and Uncertain, In which we ſhal Run Great Riſques of loſing That Bliſs, for Ever; And where we muſt Needs be Expoſed to a Thouſand Dangers, which will never Ceaſe to Purſue us 'till we ſhall be Arreſted by the moſt Dreadful of All Evils, that is to Say, by Death; Together with the Hazard and Doubtful Condition of our Souls, In Reſpect to a Better State; Yet, As we are Born without the Capacity of Reflection, we can have no ſenſe of our Unhappineſs, Nor know, till we come afterwards to the Uſe of it, what Great Reaſon we have to Lament the Miſery of our own Condition: But, as for our Bleſſed Saviour, tho' He came into the World, Indeed, A tender, Little Babe, In Every External Article of Form, and Shape, and Impotence, like us; Altho' He made his firſt Apearance, In the World, as the Offspring of our firſt Parent, *Adam*; yet was He, at the ſame time, fill'd with the Plenarty of Wiſdom and Knowledge, As God; And, therefore, He Lamented The Miſeries of

of our Sad, Deplorable Condition, Under a Full Sense, and Idea of All that can be Conceived, as the fatal Reſult and Conſequence of thoſe Tranſgreſſions which have Provoked the Juſtice of the moſt Righteous God, and Brought the Curſe of 'em All, upon Mankind! He Saw plainly the Tyranny and Oppreſſion of the Fleſh, and the World; The Diſſoluteneſs and Violence of Human Paſſions; The Inſenſibility and Forgetfulneſs of Heavenly Joys; The Reluctancy and Averſion to holy things; The Vileneſs, and Amuſements of Worldly Cares; The Numberleſs Generation of Evil Thoughts, of Criminal and Vicious Deſires; Unſavoury Words, and Vain Diſcourſes; And The Unwarrantable Treſpaſſes of All Mankind, who had ever Lived, to that Moment, or that Ever ſhould be Born, Even to the End of the World: He Knew that There could be No Other Means to Cure All Theſe Evils, and Redeem us from Deſtruction, but Only His Mercy; And to what Great End He had, So Willingly, taken upon Himſelf, to *Satisfy* and *Attone* for the Sins of the Whole World.

But nothing went ſo near him, and Touch'd His Heart ſo Senſibly, as His Fore-knowledge, of the little Uſe and Advantage there would be made of his bitter Sufferings and Paſſion, for us Sinners; And how Ungrateful Mankind would Prove: It ſo Pierc'd his righteous Soul, to have Theſe Melancholy Images before him, that His Eyes were Become two Rivulets of Tears which Continually Glided on, and Flow'd with a Current even to the *Mercy Seat*, There to Quench and Appeaſe the Wrath of God, juſtly Incens'd againſt us! For, Our Omniſcient Redeemer, not

only Beheld the Degenerate Condition of Mankind in General, But He had A full View alſo of the Particular Offence and Guilt of Every Single Soul; So that there is not a Living Man but Ought to Contemplate This Scene, and, In his Meditations Thereon, to Look upon Theſe Drops of Heaven, Theſe Tears of our Dear Redeemer, as A Balm of Mercy Shower'd Down for His ſake; To Take them as a Treaſure, in which He has a Share; To joyn, in Humble Acknowlegement, that Himſelf, amongſt the Reſt of his Fellow Creatutes, has been the Cauſe of them; And to Diſpoſe and Qualify Himſelf ſo as to Become a fit Object for that Remiſſion and Forgiveneſs, which his moſt Gracious Redeemer has, By Theſe Merits, Purchas'd for him.

V. It Pleaſed God to ſhew the Prophet *Ezekiel*, In a Viſion, A moſt Stately, and Magnificent Temple, In which there was a * *Fountain of Living Water, which Spouted from the Right Side of the Houſe, and had a Healing Vertue in it*; Inſomuch that *Every Creature that Came Near it, Received Life.* Now, By the South, or *Right Side*, of the Sanctuary, According to the uſual Phraſe of the Holy Scripture, Is meant the *Power of God*; And, By the *Spring of Theſe Waters of Life*, The *Flowing Treaſures* of his GOODNESS, That are to be met with, In the Living Temple of the INEFFABLE DIVINITY; that is, In OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, Becauſe, In the Body of Chriſt, which He Himſelf Calls *A Temple*, Dwells the *Whole Plenarty and Fullneſs of the God-head*; And, that, at his Nativity, He ſhed and Iſſued forth, from Both his Eyes, as from two Wholſom, Salutary Fountains, A Torrent of Living Water, whoſe

* Ezech. 47. 1, 9.

whoſe Vertue was Medicinal, and Effectually Healing of All Our Infirmities, and Malady: Let it, then, be No longer Enquired, why the Holy Goſpel Says * *Bleſſed are They that Mourn and Weep Now*, Since they have the Precious and Balmy Tears of the Weeping Jeſus for their Conſolation; For, This Divine Saviour, By taking upon Himſelf the Treſpaſſes of his Children, has, On their Account, Perform'd the Part of a A moſt Tender Father: He Wept only for Them; He ſent his Angels to Pronounce to Mankind, *That Peace*, and That Great Occaſion of Joy, that He had procur'd, for them, by his own Sorrows and Afflictions: 'Tis Natural to Parents to Drudge, and undergo a thouſand Difficulties and Pains that their Children may Enjoy themſelves, and Live without Care or Trouble; And Juſt ſo has our Dear Lord, and moſt true Father Behaved Himſelf towards us: He would have us to be Merry and Chearful; Enjoy A Life of Eaſe, of Pleaſure, and Contentment, whilſt He, Alone, is, Himſelf, Labouring, and Suffering and Weeping for our Sakes.

* St. Mat. 5. 4.

VI. The Holy Scripture Teaches us a very Great Truth, when It tells us, that *It is* † *Better to Go Into the Houſe of Mourning than to Go Into the Houſe of Feaſting*, Not Only Becauſe the Jollity and Pleaſures of this World are followed, with Bitter, and Sadneſs, or Death, Cloſe In their Retinue; But Beſides, There is, Generally, Among the Jovial Delights and Amuſements of this World, A Diſ-regard and a Forgetfulneſs of God, and Eternal Salvation; And, They Bring Men Into Such Supine and Inconſiderate Blindneſs and Stupidity, that thoſe follys which Naturally

† Eccleſ. 7. 2.

Naturally bring Sorrow and Tears upon them, are Not leſs Scandalous and Shameful, Than Thoſe which They Rejoyce in. They Value and Eſteem Riches; The Proſperity and Affluence of this World; The Temptations of the Fleſh; And, As the Holy Scripture Expreſſes it, * *They Spend their Days in Mirth, and In a Moment fall down Into Hell*, Where they are Undeceived and See their unhappy miſtake without Redreſs, When it is too Late, and to no Purpoſe; And where They muſt Still Sorrow on and Mourn without Conſolation or Hope for Ever; They Behold Themſelves Miſerable In this Life, when They can go on No Longer In their Debaucherys, that have Deſtroy'd them; When They can No Longer Satisfie their Luſts and Appetites; When They find Themſelves Reduc'd to Want and Miſery; Tho' this might bring them Into the moſt Certain Road to Salvation: But, Alaſs! They Will not Become Contrite, to Deplore the Tranſgreſſions of their Soul, The Sins they have Committed againſt God, The Loſs of Heaven, and the Danger They are In of Eternal Death and Damnation.

* Job 21. 13.

We Find Nothing of All This in the Stable at *Bethlehem:* There is Nothing In This *Houſe of Mourning*, where the Bleſſed Babe is Weeping, But the Exclamation of Angels, Spiritual Joys; Celeſtial Benevolence; An Holy Community; Compoſed of *Mary* and *Joſeph*, and a few poor Shepherds; whoſe Buſineſs, There, was to Bewayle the Sinfulneſs and Curſe of Sin, To Scorn and Deſpiſe vain Pleaſures; To Work out their Salvation, and to Regale themſelves with True and Solid Comforts:

ſorts: It will be Better, therefore, to Go Into this Houſe of Mourning, than Into an Houſe of Mirth and Pleaſure!

VII. Tears, Generally Speaking, Are the Tokens, or Effects of Sadneſs; Becauſe They Proceed Either from the Privation of ſome Good, which was Dear to us, or by the Preſence of ſome Surprizing, and Deſired Object, which, by its Sudden Appearance, In an Inſtant Changes our Sadneſs Into Joy: Now, The Tears, which our Bleſſed Saviour Shed, Proceeded from the Same Original: For, Altho' 'twas not poſſible for Him to find a Deficiency of any Good, that belong'd to Him, As He Comprehends, and Is the Fullneſs of All felicity; Yet He is, Notwithſtanding that, Senſible of the Privation of thoſe Bleſſings which we have Forfeited; And Sympathiſes with us In the Return of thoſe Bleſſing, we Recover, In, and thro' Him. Thus, He is The Companion of Our Sorrows and Tears; As well Thoſe which are drawn from our Eyes by our Afflictions, as thoſe which Are the Reſult of Surpriſing, and Sudden Joy, by the Concern and Intereſt He Takes In all our Happineſs and Misfortune.

It Behoves us All then, to Search Deep into the Bottom of our Hearts, to Examine Our Inclinations, and Propenſity to Good and Evil; that from thence we may Conclude whether we have Any Part in our Saviour's Tears: For a Chriſtian Ought to be Apprehenſive of Nothing ſo much as the Proneneſs in our Fleſh, which Prompts us to Give Up with Eaſe, to the Suggeſtions of Thoſe Carnal Appetites, which are Unworthy a Soul Deſign'd, and Form'd for the *Enjoyment of God*, and a *State of Eternal Happineſs*:

For

For from Thence Ariſes that Indolence and falſe Peace, that Sooths the Soul In Its Tranſgreſſions, and Sinks the Thoughtleſs Sinner into a Lethargy, whilſt He is Sacrificing the Purity and Innocence of his Conſcience, as if he had committed no Offence againſt His God that might Require a Tear; or that he Had no Reaſon to Fear either *the Hour of Death* or *to be Call'd to Judgment*. Men, too Often, look upon That as a Happy Day, In which They have Gratified their moſt Brutiſh Luſts, and Deſires; Whereas, If, Inſtead of That, They would but Allow themſelves a little Time to reflect upon the Exorbitant Emotions of their Hearts, and the Precious Time They have Sacrific'd to the World, to the Vanities and Follies thereof; They would find Great Reaſon, to be Afraid that Chriſt has Shed Thoſe Precious Tears In vain, upon Their Account; Unprofitably in Reſpect to their Poor Souls! And leaſt they ſhould one Day find themſelves, Regiſtred among the Number of Thoſe, who are Conſign'd to *weeping* and GNASHING OF TEETH FOR EEVER.

VIII. O How much more Wiſe and Happy is The Conduct of a Servant of God, who, Living ſequeſtred from the World, and Deſpiſing all Vain and Inferiour Enjoyments, as Unworthy of his Soul, Mingles his Tears with Thoſe of his Bleſſed Redeemer! And Reliſhes Thoſe *Spiritual Repaſts* which produce, and wait, in this Life, thoſe Bleſſings which ſhall follow in the next! How much more happy He, who, being Contrite for his Guilt, joyns himſelf, together with his Saviour, to weep and to Lament, with him; And, thro' Him, to Obtain the Remiſſion of his Sins!

How

How much more Prudent He, who, Retiring inward, into himſelf, takes an Account of his Soul, of All his Life Paſt! Who Reforms his Life, and is wholly taken up about the Salvation of his Soul! Who Returns to God, in Sincerity and a true Faith; who gives up his whole Self to Him! who is Receiv'd into the Fellowſhip and Participation of his Love! and who has a Taſte of that Divine Peace, which God gives to Thoſe, who, having Bewail'd their Sin, And *wept Bitterly with Chriſt*, Find, thro' his Mercy, a moſt *Sweet* and *Refreſhing Conſolation.*

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon The Tears which Our Bleſſed Saviour ſhed, at His Nativity, for Us.

I. FROM whence Proceed Theſe Showers from thine Eyes, which flow in ſuch a Stream, O divine Infant! Thou! Who art the *Comfort of Thoſe that mourn*! Why doſt thou ſo Diſſolve Thy Self, and Pour forth thoſe Floods of Liquid Sorrow, ever ſince thine Entrance into a Sinful World; ſince the only End of thy Coming was to make Us happy! The Angels made Heaven Ring, Rending the Air with Ecchoe's and Exultations of Triumph! They ſung the *Glad Tidings of Great Joy*, to the Shepherds, upon thy Birth-day! And they Proclaim'd A JUBILEE to Mankind

Mankind, Becauſe they had a Saviour Born! And that Gracious Redeemer is thy ſelf! Thou art He! This Saviour! O Amiable Jeſus! Thou art this Bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer! And yet, amidſt All Theſe Shouts and joyful Acclamations, Both in Heaven and Earth, Thou only weepeſt, And art Mourning by thy ſelf! How ſhoulſt Thou be, for ever, Praiſed, O my God! How Eternally Bleſſed and Ador'd! Who art Come among us with ſo Ardent a Deſire to Purchaſe and Redeem us, that Thou wouldſt not Interrupt the mighty Work ſo much as for a Moment! Thou weepeſt with Impatience to Die for us; Thou wouldſt forget nothing that might Conduce to Our Recovery! And Becauſe thou foreſeeſt that many a contrite Soul, like the Penitent *Magdalene*, will waſh thy Feet with their Tears, thro' the Senſe and Abhorrence of their Guilt, Thou art reſolved to be Before-hand with them, in ſetting Open the Rivulets of thine Eyes, Before thy Father, to Prepare the Divine Goodneſs to Forgiveneſs; to Render Him favourable of Acceſſion to us, and Conſecrate and Sanctifie our Tears with Thine Own! And thus art Thou Come into the World, to Begin That Sacrifice for Souls, with thy Tears, which, in the Cataſtrophe of thy Life, thou wert to Compleat and Finiſh with thy Blood.

II. What ſhall I Give thee in Return, O Thou Eternal Object of my Soul's Delight, for all the Benefits Thou haſt Done unto me! Like us, upon thine Entrance into the World, Thou Expreſſeſt thy Complaints by the Bubbles in thine Eyes; But the important Subject of thy Tears is vaſtly Different from the unhappy and wretched Occaſion of Ours! We expreſs thoſe Tokens of Com-

Complaint, ſo ſoon as we are Born, Becauſe we are Thruſt into our Place of Exile; Becauſe we are Baniſh'd Hither, from our Paradiſe, to a Place where we are Slaves to Drudge under the Packs and heavy Loads of Sin! And are ſure to be Expoſed to All the Perils and Loſs that the Grand Adverſary of our Souls, or the Boſom Enemy within us, our own Carnal Appetite and Vicious Propenſity, can expoſe us to; And to All the Miſeries of this painful Life! And altho' God has favour'd us ſo far, as that we are not capable of the Impreſſions of Knowledge, in our Infant State, ſo as to underſtand what it is that we ſo Naturally, as ſoon as we breath vital Air, lament in Tears, and inſenſibly Bewail; yet God and Nature has contriv'd it ſo, that we Weep and Cry, at that time, as if we Knew what we Did; or that the ſtrongeſt Impreſſions of our Miſeries were ſtampt upon us! But as for thee, O Eternal Wiſdom! Thy Infant Cries come not by Inſtinct, as ours; Thou Expreſſeſt thoſe Signs of Sorrow, becauſe thou haſt thy Tragedy before thine Eyes! Thou Beholdeſt the Occaſion of *the Curſe*; The World of univerſal Sin, that is laid upon thee; The Affront and Injuries that has been Acted againſt thy Fathers Juſtice; The Perdition (of thoſe Images of God) of Souls; Their Hidden, ſecret Wants and Poverty; The Clouds of Ignorance and Error with which They are overſhadowed, and blind; The vain Amuſements and Pleaſures by which they are defiled; and the vicious Habits which Render them Obnoxious, to Periſh and be Undone for ever! Thou didſt Lament, in Præſcience, the Tranſgreſſion of thy Laws; The ſtupid Inſenſibility and Forgetfulneſs, in

Men

Men, of thoſe *ineſtimable eternal Treaſures* Thou ſhouldſt lay before them; Their Careleſneſs and Neglect of their own Salvation; The Empire and Dominion of Sin and Satan; The *Wrath of God*; The Danger of Eternal Perdition and Damnation; The falſe, miſtaken Peace, whereby Mankind would be Expos'd to ſo many dreadful Hazard's of being Undone; And the Utter Impoſſibility there is for us to eſcape theſe Dangers, or meet with any Security from this *Legion of Temptations*, with which we are thus ſurrounded, without thine All-ſufficient Arm and Goodneſs to Defend and ſuccour us.

III. But becauſe we find in thee this Only, Sovereign, and true Redreſs to all our Miſeries and Want; Therefore it was Thy will, that all the Earth ſhould Rejoyce at thy Nativity; and that the Celeſtial World, finding the Vacancy of the fallen Spirits Repleniſh'd and made up by the Recovery and Redemption of Mankind, ſhould Bear its Part alſo in this ſacred Gratulation and Triumphant Solemnity. Thou thy ſelf wouldſt be The only One Given up to Weep that we might rejoyce in the meritorious Effects of Thy Tears! Theſe flow'd with an impetuous Torrent from thy Heart which was All wrapt up in the Flames of thy Charity, that was burning with the Deſire and Eagerneſs to heal and infuſe thy Graces into mine: Let them flow, O thou Fountain of Celeſtial Comfort! *Theſe precious Tears!* That it may be healed, and ſoftned, and made clean! O how I adore Thee! Thou Lover of Souls! Thou immenſe Goodneſs! Thou God whoſe Mercy and Compaſſion is ſo Infinite and immenſurate! I worſhip thee, Thou Lamb of God! Who takeſt away the Sins of the World! I

Adore

Adore thy Goodneſs, for thy Concern and Zeal in procuring ſo Efficacious a Cure for my Soul.

As the Holy Prophet has juſtly repreſented thee, How zealous art Thou and impatient for the Prize! Who couldſt not Stay even till thou couldſt ſpeak, but with thy Tears, even in thy ſwadling Cloaths, didſt provide and purchaſe Celeſtial Treaſures, the Mercies of God, and a thouſand ſpiritual Graces for ſinful Men! O thou heavenly Bridegroom! My Soul's Love! O *Compaſſionate Father*, to a wretched Sinner! With infinite Reaſon mayſt thou ſay that the * *Children of the Bridegroom cannot weep ſo long as He is with them; but they ſhall Lament when He is taken from them*, becauſe they are deprived of his Sight: For, ſo long as He is preſent with them, He takes care to enquire into the Wants and Neceſſities of his Family, and to comfort them with his Graces, whilſt his Children ſport themſelves and Bask under the Indulgences of the Parent: And juſt ſo it is, moſt dear Lord! That from thy firſt Entrance into the World, it was thy Indulgence to Rejoyce and cheer our Souls, whilſt thou waſt weeping for us, and that we ſhould throw all Our Care upon thee, whilſt thou waſt labouring and in Sorrow, by thy ſelf, in order to procure our EVERLASTING Joy and Felicity. * Matt. 9. 15.

IV. But Alaſs! Thou didſt not only begin thy Days in Tears, O! Lord of my Life! But thou art going on in the ſame Mournful Way; and findeſt no Relief, no Ebb to this Torrent of thy Grief but by thy bitter Death upon the Croſs! Thou paſſeſt away thy Days and Nights in Prayer; Thy Cheeks are ſodden with Tears,

and the very Ground whereon thou breatheſt thine Interceſſions is madid and Bedew'd with the Drops that Diſtil from thine Eyes; Thou feeleſt the ſmart of my Wounds as if they were thine own! And thou ſueſt for the Bleſſings of Heaven for me, as if Thou Thy ſelf ſtoodſt in need of 'em: When thou couldſt not yet ſuffer any other way, were not thoſe briny Rivulets which fill'd thine Eyes, and in which thou didſt bewail the Guilt thou thy ſelf hadſt no concern in, as to thine own part, and the Groans and Sobs thou Fetchedſt, and the Heavings of thy Breaſt in Throbs and Sighings for our Sins, whereby thou wert labouring to purchaſe Redemption, which thou thy ſelf didſt not want, were not theſe ſufficient to convince me of thy Love, and to attract my Soul unto thee? O Thou Inexhauſtible Source of Mercy! O Unbounded Charity! How is it that I do not melt into Tears, and Burn with Love for thee! Is it poſſible that I ſhould Leave thee by thy ſelf to lament the Sins that I have committed! And that I do not at leaſt mingle my Tears with thine!—O Ye ſacred Pearls! Ye Blazing Globes of Liquid Fire, why do ye not melt and diſſolve my Heart! That it may flow in Streams, and help to waſh away my Sins, and that its lambent Flame may be fed by that of my Celeſtial Redeemer!

Since Thou canſt find Nothing In me, O Thou Eternal Wiſdom! That Could Move Thee to my Succour, But the very Condition, I was In, to Waſt my whole Life In Mourning; What an Infatuation Is It, in me, to Gad after the Amuſements and Deceitful Pleaſures of this World, without Any Senſe of my own Wretched,

ed, and Miſerable Condition! Enlighten me, Thou Celeſtial Glory! And Diſpel the Darkneſs In my Soul! That I may Behold my Self In a true Light, and with a Contrite Heart Abhor me of my Guilt! Take off my Heart from the Love of theſe Terreſtrial, and Sublunary Things, which Eſtrange and Divorce me from Thee! Wean me, of my fond Deſires, after the pleaſures of this World, which Vitiate my Palate, that I may Relliſh nothing but Thy Divine Sweets! That I may Nauſeate Thoſe Vices, for the future, which have Occaſion'd Thee to Lament and Weep ſo much on my Account!

O Thou Immenſe Goodneſs! Who art Ever Patient to Bear with me! Always Bountiful, and Liberal In heaping thy Bleſſings upon me! In what a Deſperate Condition ſhould I be, were it Not, that Thou haſt Pity on me! When I Caſt my Eyes on my paſt Life, I find the moſt preſſing Calls to Grief and Terror; Not only on Account of thoſe Sins that I have never yet Bemoaned, my Self for; But, even, for Thoſe very Tranſgreſſions, that I have Pretended to Repent of, with ſo Great Coldneſs and Indifference! For, alaſs! Have I ever been ſo Senſible of The Loſs of thy Love, as when I was Deprived of any Temporal Delight! With what a Senſe of Sorrow do I Lament the Loſs of A Father, or a Brother, or Indeed of Any Other Relation, or Friend, who cannot Deliver me from my Miſeries; And whom, Sooner or Later, I muſt part withall! But I loſe Thee, for ever, by my Tranſgreſſions, who Art my *Supreme Good!* I Forfeit that Eternal State of Happineſs, for which I was Created, And This V.

Ruine Affects me not at all! If My Fellow Creature Affronts me, or does not Pay me so much Respect as, In my own Opinion, I conceive, he Ought to do; Or If Any thing happens to me that Thwarts my Inclination; How do I, Then, Express my Resentment, and shew the Inward Broiling In my Soul by the Superficial Effrontery, and Contraction of my Brows! How does it Grate upon my Mind to Suffer, In my Honour, or Reputation! And with what Extreme Uneasiness, and Pain, Is it, that I Behold Any One, In Greater Esteem and Character than my Self! How do I pass my Life In Merriment and Recreation! And Cares, and Sooth my Most Fatal Enemy! That is to Say, This Material, and Corruptible Body, which is the Fountain and Foundation of all my Miseries! If This is Incommoded Any way, Or Hindred of its Enjoyments, I am, Then, Restless, and Uneasy, and lose The Peace and Repose of my Spirit; And, which is yet much more Deplorable, I Squander Away the Precious Time, which Thou, My Gracious God! Hast Allotted me, to Work out my Eternal Salvation In! In doing that which will Rob me of my Hopes for Ever! Being Completely Wretched and undone upon This Account, that I cannot Bear to be Curtail'd of the Opportunities of Ruining my Soul, and Acting those Vices, which must, At the Same time, Estrange Thee from me, for Ever; Even Thee, who Art my Only Felicity and Blessing.

I am Weak and Feeble Under Every Temptation; Overcome with the Least Conflict or Struggle; Slack and Remiss to Good; But Audacious In Evil; Void of Light; without Charity;

rity; without An Inclination to do thy pleaſure! Without a Will to Suffer for thy Sake! Without the Secret Whiſpers of an Inward Peace and Quiet Conſcience! And In a Word, without Every thing that's Good and Eligible; But what proceeds from Thee; But, All This, is to Say little to the Matter! I am without Thee! The Only True Life of my Soul! I Behold my Self In the Region of the Shadow of Death; And, yet I am not Touch'd with it All this while! I am not Smitten! I do not Melt Into Tears In thy Preſence! Art not Thou, O Divine Jeſus! In the trueſt Senſe, My Father, My Brother, and My Friend? The Companion of My Pilgrimage, My Glory, My Treaſure, My Conſolation, and My Supreme Felicity! How is it, Then, that I am not Aſhamed to Bewayle my Temporal Misfortunes; And yet am ſo Inſenſable of the Unhappineſs of loſing Thee! Let me Appeal to Theſe Precious Drops from thine Eyes! O Let them Supply the Deficiency of mine, and Purchaſe me the Bleſſings which they Merit!

Put an End, O Lord! To my Miſery, and ſuffer me no longer to continue in this Blindneſs and Inſenſibility of Soul! I have already Sacrific'd a great Part of my Life to the Cares of the World! That which Remains is not too much to purchaſe a future State of Glory in! Let me, at leaſt begin now to enter into thy Service, moſt Gracious Lord! For I am Broken with Contrition for my Sins; And I humbly crave that I may without diſguiſe bemoan them, and lay my Guilt before thy Mercy Seat! —— But it is from your Streams O ye powerful Floods, that fill the Soul with Heaven, to turn

my Eyes alſo into Rivers of ſwelling Tides! Wipe off then! O ye ſweet and chryſtal Waters, waſh all the Spots that ſtain my Soul! Ye flaming, lympid Meteors, Kindle in my Soul the Love of God! And an Abhorrence of my ſelf! Ye Diſtilling Fountains that Pierce into the Heart of God, The Eternal Father! Penetrate mine alſo! And as ye have brought down Bleſſings of all ſorts from above, upon the whole Earth, ſo do ye Efficaciouſly lift up my Heart, even to deſire thoſe things that are above, where there are Rivers of Pleaſure with God! O When will that bleſſed Hour come when I ſhall perceive the Operation of theſe precious Tears within me! When They ſhall have purchas'd for me, O dear Saviour, more than I know how to ask! O Lord! Hear the Bubbling of this Stream! For there is nothing in me to move Thee to liſten to my Groans, Grant me therefore the Bleſſings which they intercede for!

VI. 'Tis true, Generally Speaking, that Tears are the Offspring and Reſult of Sorrow! For Grief being nothing elſe but a Pain upon the Mind cauſed by the Privation of ſome Object that was very dear, and fixt Cloſe to it, we only Lament the Loſs of what we Love! And when the Beloved Object is Reſtored to us again, the Paſſion Changes into Tears of Joy: From Hence it is, moſt Dear Redeemer! That, Thy Humble Servants, whoſe Fervency of Soul to Thee, Sends them In purſuit after thee, Equally Lament the Sins that have Separated them from Thee, as they Rejoyce when Thou Vouchſafeſt to Communicate, thy Self unto them, and are not able to Refrain from Tears On Both Sides: For Grief, when They Loſe their Vital Soul,

Soul, In loſing thee; And out of Unutterable joy, not to be Expreſs'd, but by the Guſhing of their Eyes, with Water, Being tranſported with the Comforts of thy Preſence: But, as for thy Self, Moſt Gracious Mediator! What is there, that ſhould make Thee Mourn, who haſt Nothing upon thine Own Account to Lament for! Can there be Any Inſtance of Felicity Out of Thee! Thou, Thy Self, art The Supreme Good! Thou haſt All the Treaſures of the Wiſdom and Knowlege of God! And, as there is Nothing Deficient In Thee, there Can be No Addition to thy Self-Sufficiency! Thou haſt No View therefore, In theſe Tears, but for the Sake of Mankind: And, Having the Fullneſs of the God-head In thy Self, Thou didſt Breath after Nothing but for them; Thou Never wilt Give Over, Bleſſed Lord! Never Let this Celeſtial Fire be Extinguiſh'd, till Thou haſt Changed Our Souls Into thine Own Nature, which thou haſt Created to Live for ever In thy Fruition: But, Art not Thou Infinite In thine Attributes? Art not thou Omnipotent? Who then, what Creature ſhall be Able to Prevent Thine Almighty Operation, In Me, to Deſtroy whatever is not pleaſing In thy Sight; And to Transform me wholly Into thy Self that I may pleaſe and Obey Thee.

VII. O That my Tears might be my Meat and Drink Day and Night! Till I ſhould arrive at the full Poſſeſſion of thee, O moſt Bleſſed God! Let me ever Lament the Loſs of thee! The great Miſery and Danger of the Privation of thee! Strengthen me O Lord with thy Preſence! That mine Enemies may be Scattered and Confounded! I feel the Deſire ſtrong within

me to make my humble Addreſs to thee; to pay my Adoration and Love to thee; And to drie up thoſe Tears thou haſt ſhed for my ſake! But there is ſomething in me, that ſtill brings a Guſhing from thine Eyes, which the Blindneſs and Darkneſs of my Soul will not give me to underſtand! Do thou, O Lord, who doſt ſo throughly know me, and who ſeeſt into the Bottom of my Soul, heal all my Sores, and take from me all the Evil in me, which makes thee ſo to weep for me; and Vouchſafe me all thoſe good things, thoſe Divine Graces, and Bleſſings which thou deſireſt I ſhould poſſeſs. O That I did but underſtand how much better 'tis to *go into the Houſe of Mourning, than into the Houſe of Mirth and Feaſting*! Since The Tears and Sorrows of this Life are ſo inſtrumental to produce the Inconceivable Joys of the other! Thou art come into the World, O my God, in a poor and Low Condition; And thou haſt given up thy precious Life, with a Groan in bitter Anguiſh! And thou art He who will wipe away all Tears from the Eyes of the Juſt made perfect, whilſt thoſe *Libertines*, who ſquander away their appointed Time, here, in Mirth and Jollity, ſhall be caſt down, in a Moment, INTO HELL! I had therefore rather, a thouſand times, go with thee into thy Stable and there lament and bewail my Condition with thee, than with the NIMRODS *and* TYRANTS of the World, ſpend my Days in Court Luxury, and ſenſual Entertainments. There are no Enjoyments without Mixture; ſomething interwoven in them, of Bitterneſs and Sorrow; And the only pure and unmix'd Pleaſure a Soul can taſte, is to mourn with thee! The Righteous, who paſs their Days with

with thee in Tears, who are breathing, inceſſant, after thee, find the fullneſs of Conſolation in thee! Grant me gracious Lord, that I may be one *of that little Number*. O bleſſed Moment! in which, whilſt the Eyes are Bath'd in Tears, the Soul is encircled in thy tendereſt Embraces.

Take me then into thine Arms thou heavenly Babe! That we may weep together, Thou in thy Love for me, and I out of my Love towards Thee! Turn me unto thee O Lord, that I may poſſeſs thee! Comfort thou thy ſelf with me, that I may find Comfort and Satisfaction in thee! O give me to Taſte of thy Sweets! How great Bleſſings doſt thou impart to thoſe that mourn with thee! How true is thy Word wherein thou haſt aſſured us: *How bleſſed they are that mourn after this manner!* Take from me, then, my moſt dear Lord, all the vain and Glittering Pomps of this World! And O let it be thy Providence to *Give me Tears* and *Mourning* for my Portion here, that I may, in the end, meet with the glorious Recompence of Reward, even the Comforts of Enjoying Thee to Endleſs Ages.

THE Sixth Inſtance OF THE SUFFERINGS OF OUR SAVIOUR.

CHAP. VI.

In the Sharpneſs of the Seaſon when He was Born.

I. OUR Bleſſed Saviour has Not Only Undertaken the Conqueſt of Sin, whereby He Purchaſed for us that Divine Grace, and Glory we had Loſt; But has alſo Left us thoſe Examples, of Vertue, In which we may See, Clearly, Both the Miſchief

Miſchief that Reſults Naturally from Sin, And The Means to Avoid it: Upon This Account It is, That He has, In a Moſt Eſpecial Manner, declar'd againſt thoſe Vices which are moſt Prevalent and Epidemical In The World, And the more Dangerous and Uſual from Popularity and Cuſtom; And So Entirely Engag'd Himſelf In The Practiſe of All Thoſe Vertues which Are directly Oppoſite, and Contrary Thereto; Such as Humility, and Patience; The Avoiding Unwarrantable Pleaſures, And All Thoſe Vanities which the World Eſteems as Faſhionable And Engaging: But, Becauſe The Love of the Outer Man, And The Solicitude about *That Part*, is what Mankind are Generally the Moſt Addicted to; From whence The Greateſt Confuſion and Irregularities Ariſe; The Son of God, Even at His Nativity, as well as afterwards, during the whole Courſe of His Life, Expos'd His Sacred Perſon to Such Severity and Hardſhip, that Thoſe who Chooſe, and Have the Power, to Sequeſter Themſelves from the World, and Die Unto Themſelves, May Find, In Him, A Conſtant *Pattern* for their Mortification, and Devotement to God; And They who have Not the Fortitude and Courage to Paſs The Ordeal of So Severe a Courſe and Self-Denial, May Learn, at Leaſt, from Chriſt's Inimitable Reſignation, That Way, How Fearful and Apprehenſive They Ought to be, of Themſelves, and of That Domeſtique Enemy, Inhærent In Us, which is So Forcible to Rob us of Our Eternal Happineſs.

One of thoſe Conveniencies for the Body, After which The Generality of Men Employ the Beſt part of their Life, Is About Apparel and Attire; To procure which, they are perpetually Wracking their Brains, with a Thouſand Inventions, to defend their Bodies from the Inclemency of the Weather, and Viciſſitude of the Seaſons; Or, to Secure themſelves, as much as They can, from thoſe Influences, which it is not poſſible, for Human Nature, totally to Avoid: And to Theſe, Another part, of their Care, is to *Joyn Houſe to Houſe*, And to Erect Magnificent, and Stately Manſions, with the Utmoſt Art, of Architecture, to Model them Into the moſt Commodious, and Uniform Lodgings, and Apartments; And, for Feaſting the Eye with the moſt Luxuriant Proſpects: Theſe They Set off with Regular, and Spacious Ducts, and Formations of Gardening, with their Wilderneſſes, Viſto's, and Water-Works, *&c.* And, within doors, They Furniſh, with the Richeſt Moveables; with The Proviſion of a Sumptuous and Plentiful Table, with Muſick, and a Thouſand other Indulgencies, Invented by the moſt Conſummate Skill and Artifice, to Counterwork whatever would Interpoſe between the Senſual Enjoyments of the Carnal Man: But as we Ought Not to be Subſervient to An Enemy, But too Well Entertain'd, tho' Both a Rebel and a Traitour to the Soul, The Holy Fathers, to prevent this Diſorder and Exceſs, have, by the Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, Contriv'd Community's and The Abſtracted way of A Monaſtick Life, where, In Retrenching All Exceſs And Superfluity, In their Little Apartments, In their Diet, and In their Habit,

bit, They Content Themſelves with a Modicum of Juſt what's Neceſſary; And have frequent Opportunities to Mortify and Subdue the Senſual Appetite, and Immoderate Deſires of The Fleſh; To this Purpoſe, Many there Are, who withdraw from the World, and Retire themſelves Into the moſt Loneſom Solitude, and Hermitage; where they Live Expos'd, without a Shelter to Defend them, without a Veſtment to Cover Them, and, In a Manner, without the Common Subſiſtences of Life: Others paſs their Days In a Continual Abſtinence and Faſting; Some Take up their Habitation among the Rocks, Expos'd to Exceſſive Heats and Cold, And All the Iujurious Oppreſſions of the Weather; And Are as Paſſionatly Devoted to Abſtinence and Poverty, as the Children of This World Are Abandon'd, to their Luxury and Exceſs.

Thus, The Bleſſed Jeſus Choſe, Not only to Come Naked Into the World, Like the Reſt of the Offspring of *Adam*; But He fixed on, a Place that Was Very Inconvenient, In a Sharp and Churliſh Time Of Year, At Midnight, Shivering with Cold; And Bereft of all Sorts of Conveniency's and Succour; And All his Life Time, Afterwards, He Never Chang'd His Seamleſs Coat, which His Holy Mother had Wrought with her Own Hands, But He wore That, Even 'till He Came to Die upon The Croſs: During all the Time of his Private and Obſcure Life, He had Nothing, to Defend Him, In that Poor Cottage where He Liv'd, Either from the Extremity of The Cold or the Exceſs of Heat; And when He Began to Appear Publick in the World, and to Converſe with

with Mankind, The Ground was his Common Bed! Very often was He Expos'd to Flouds of Rain, And Storms of Wind, the Flights of Snow, The Torrid Beamings of The Sun, and Dew of Heaven; And After He had thus Paſs'd the Day, He Generally, Retired, In the Evening, to Some Mountain, or Into A Garden, And, *There*, He Spent the Night In Prayer! And Yet, He was The GOD; The CREATOR Of DAY AND NIGHT; It was He, who Diſtinguiſht the Seaſons, for The Benefit of Mankind; Altho' He Fore-Saw what Inconvenience and Trouble He ſhould, Himſelf, One Day, Meet with from the Rigour of Them: So that, whilſt His Goodneſs Provided a Thouſand Bleſſings from the Fruitfullneſs Of The Earth; And from that Exuberance of Productions, thro' the Succeſſion of Time, and Seaſons; He Prepar'd Nothing for Himſelf But PAIN and SORROW! He, Himſelf, Taſted Little, or Nothing of *All That Variety of Good Things*, In their Seaſon; But, He, Perpetually, Underwent All the Rigour and Severity that Thoſe Contrarious Viciſſitudes Could Affect Him with, or Bring upon Him.

And, Here It is, that The *Poor* and *Needy* Are Inform'd, And find Conſolation Under All their Wants: For, Altho' They are forc'd to Go without a Thouſand Things that The Rich, Abound with, Even So far as, Oftentimes, to faile In The Common Neceſſary's of Life; Yet, By Theſe Inſtances of Our Bleſſed Saviour's Voluntary Reſignation to The Utmoſt Extremitys of Indigence and Poverty, They May Eaſily Infer, that, They Ought, In Chriſtian Prudence, to make A Uertue of Neceſſity,

Neceſſity, and Change Its Hardſhips Into A Principle of Choice and Comfort: St. *Chryſoſtom* Aſſerts, that, * "*God Eſteems the Good Diſpo-* "*ſition of the Heart, and the Inclination of The* "*Soul, towards Him, above All other Shews and* "*Appearances of Devotion Whatſoever: And that* "*He does, Regard Thoſe Affections which We* "*Cannot help, Provided we bear them with Love and* "*Reſignation, as well as Thoſe which, of Our Own* "*Election, we take upon us, for his Sake*; And, Certainly, This Opinion, of The Father, is Founded upon the Strongeſt and Moſt Indubitable Reaſon; For Altho' 'tis not In the Power of Man to Eſcape thoſe Croſſes; Yet, Are They not Leſs, for all that, The Strokes of God's Hand; 'Tis He, In His Goodneſs, who has Given the Blow; And, Therefore, It is the Divine Purpoſe, and God Expects, that We Receive, And Patiently, and Submiſſively Undergo Whatever The Infinite Wiſdom thinks fitt to Inflict upon us! And Thus, what We Go thro', of Afflictions, In this World, Even altho' We Could not have Avoided them, Yet by the Right Diſpoſition of the Mind, to God, In Humility and Reſignation, they Become *Vertual*, and An Acceptable Service; Becauſe We Bear them Chearfuly, as In Submiſſion to God's Decree, And as the Fruit of that Reſignation which The Almighty, of His Goodneſs, Inſpires us with, and Beſtows upon us.

* *Serm. de Amore dei, & Tolerantia In Adverſis. Tom. 5.*

When Poor, and Indigent Souls, Are thus Furniſh'd with A Meaſure of The Holy Spirit, They Bleſs Themſelves, as Under the moſt Happy Condition, whilſt They See Themſelves Under the Same Circumſtances and State of

of Life, which their Bleſſed Saviour was In, whilſt He Convers'd with Mankind upon Earth; For He, tho' He was Born amidſt the Jews, A Generation of Men, Many of whom were, Righteous and Rich too; Yet, He Prefer'd, and Choſe Rather than to be Levell'd with Them, In their Affluence and Abundance, The Mean and Vulgar Converſation of *Mary*, and *Joſeph* and the poor Shepherds: And Indeed How Happy are They to whom Providence has Determin'd This Condition! Whoſe State of Life is Quadrate, and Concentrick with the Low, and Humble Poverty of their Redeemer! And Thereby Becomes, as it Were, MERITORIOUS thro' The Sanction It Receives from its Reſemblance to His! And if Theſe Neceſſary Trials Are of Such a Price and Eſteem In The Sight of God! Of How much More, Will He Regard Thoſe Offerings, where What we Endure for God's Sake, is The Neceſſary Reſult of our Own Choice! Certainly Thoſe who have Bid Adieu, for Ever, to The World for Chriſt's Sake, who have Left All, And Choſen to be Poor, that They Might be Rich, Only, In Him; Who, for this Reaſon, have Peopled the Deſerts, and Religious Houſes, Deny'd Themſelves Every Thing that May be Call'd Superfluous; And Us'd their Bodys with So much Severity and Mortification, Theſe, I Say, Muſt Needs find, not Only the Sanction of our Bleſſed Saviours Example for what They Do, But the Aſſiſtance of His All-Powerful Spirit, to Carry Them thro' A Work which it is Impoſſible for Human Nature to Overcome: For, as The Father has Obſerv'd, * *Love, That is Sincere, Declines No Difficultys; but The Greater*

* Chryſol. *Serm.* 147.

Greater Obſtacles It Meets with, The More Vigorouſly does it Bear Towards the Encounter, to Obtain the Object of its Deſires.

From Hence it was, that A Certain Number of Religious Siſters, of whom *Palladius* Gives the Account, After They had Liv'd, for Some Conſiderable Time, Immur'd within four Walls, All Open at the Top and Without Shelter, Being ask'd, How it was Poſſible for Them to Subſiſt Under So Sharp and Severe a Confinement; Anſwer'd, that They were ſo Charm'd and Raviſh'd with The Beauty of Their Spouſe, that the Flames of their Love, to Him, And their Ardency to Pleaſe Him, Drown'd All the ſenſe of what They Outwardly Endur'd! Were but the Worlding to Know; Were it Poſſible, for Him, to be Senſible, with what SPIRITUAL REPASTS God delights the Souls of Thoſe, who Quit the World for His Sake, It would make Them Deſpiſe their Dear, Pernicious Pleaſures; But, As This Sacred Truth Shines Stronger thro' Example, than the force of Words, Let it Suffice, In this Place, only to Give this Short Idea of the Secret Enjoyments of the Religious, even In This Life, that They Paſs their Days with much More Content, Under All their Indigence and Auſterity of Life, than The Children of the World Do, Amidſt the Overflowings, and In the Strongeſt Tides of their Luxury and Abundance; And, that they would not Change the Serene of Their Condition, for All the Pleaſures the whole World Affords, No; Not So much as A Single Moment of the Penance They Go thro', In Conſort, and Uniſon with Thoſe of Their Bleſſed Saviour.

IV. There are Some Perſons In the World who are not So Abandon'd, to It, as to Purſue its Enjoyments to the Deſtruction of their Souls; Nor ſo fervent In their Love to God as to forſake ALL and FOLLOW HIM: And Altho' what I am Now Speaking is not ſo Immediatly Applicable to Them, as to the *Other*, who are more *Conſummate* in their Love to God, and Breath more Ardently after the Perfection of Chriſtan Charity; Yet Nothing is more Certain than that Theſe have ſome Share and Advantages In the Sufferings of Our Saviour; And moſt Convincing Reaſons to Adore his Goodneſs upon this Account: For, So Great is the Indulgence of his Bounty to us, that, at the Same Time that He Goes before us Wading In Affliction, In the Utmoſt Extremity, and Setting Such a Bright Example of the moſt Heroick Sufferings and Severe Mortification, He does not Make it our Indiſpenſable Duty to follow Him In thoſe Steps, In So Perfect and Practical A Reſignation; And Altho' He Deny'd Himſelf *In All Things* to procure Our Happineſs, He Diſpenſes with us, In Our Enjoyment of All Thoſe Temporal Goods He has Created, on Purpoſe for our uſe, Provided we Do not fix them, So far In our Hearts, As to withdraw them from that Obedience and Love, We Owe Him: So that, Altho' A Chriſtian Man, May Indulge Himſelf, In Some Meaſure, with the Good Things of this World; Yet, So Long as He Keeps within the Bounds of his Duty, Frequenting the Bleſſed Sacrament, And Acting Prudently within the Compaſs of his Own Sphere, and Uſing Effectual Precautions, that the Gratifying his Senſes Does not Prevent his Care

Care and Proviſion for his Immortal Soul, God Can *Raiſe, out of Theſe Stones, Children unto* Abraham; *Roſes out of Theſe Thorns*; *And Good Fruit out of this Barren Land*, This Heart of *Sterility* and *Corruption*.

And Beſides, There is another Way whereby Thoſe, who Live In a Moderate Enjoyment of the Good Things of this World, may Secure God's Mercy; And that is, Often to Apply Themſelves to his Mercy Seat, And There, with a Proſtrate Humility and Confuſion of Face, to Repreſent, Before Him, their own Softneſs and Luxury In Compare with the Auſterities, Perplexity, and Wants of Their Saviour; To Implore his Compaſſion upon their Unworthineſs; And the Aſſiſtance of The Divine Grace, to Conquer Every Oppoſition that would Deſtroy the Love of God within Them: For The Love of Our Indulgent Saviour towards us is of So Tender a Nature; And He prizes the Abaſement and Humility of the Soul to Such a Degree, that Our Good Deſires Oftentimes Preponderate the Weight of Our Tranſgreſſions In his Sight.

Our Firſt Parent was Condemn'd, After his Tranſgreſſion, to Eat his Bread *In the Sweat of his Brows*; that is, He was Sentenc'd to the Miſeries of A Painful Life; To Spend his Days In Labour and Fatigue; And to Reap but Little from that Ground which God had Impregnated with Brambles and Thorns; The Bleſſed Jeſus has Undergone This Very Curſe in the Various Paſſages of his Auſtere Life; which has Been but One Continual Scene of Labour and Sorrow, out of His Stupendous Love to us; But Alas! He has met, after all, but with very V.

litle Succeſs, of All his Mighty and Amazing Works, thro' the Prevention of our Ingratitude and Wickedneſs! He Has Sown the Seed of Life In an Unprofitable Land, which has, of itſelf, Brought forth nothing but the Fruits of Death and Eternal Perdition and Damnation.

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon The Tears which Our Bleſſed Saviour's Shed, at his Nativity, for us.

1. HOW Comes it that Thou Doſt not Melt this Obdurate Heart of Mine, O Thou Divine Tenderneſs! That I may, for Ever, Love and Adore the Contrivances of thy Mercy! How Canſt Thou Endure that My Soul ſhould Still Continue Frozen, and *All Ice*, Amidſt Such Quickening Flames, as Environ and Surround It! Let It be No Longer Thus, O Lord! Let not this Celeſtial Fire, In which Thou, Thy Self, Art Totally Abſorp'd, be wholly Taken up In feeding upon Thee! Lord! Send Some Little Spark, Even Into My Soul! It will find ſomething There to Try Its Force; A Stony Heart to Soften; A World of Sin to Deſtroy; And An Infinity of Imperfections to Conſume! It is True, that I Adore Thee, Thou

Thou Heaven-Born Child! Thou haſt Raviſhed my Soul! My Supreme Benefactor! Thou art Always The ſame, And This Little Infant Body, Thou haſt Aſſumed, Cannot Poſſibly Conceal, nor hide from Our Amazement, thine Abundant Riches! There is Nothing Impotent or Weak, In Thee, But what Seems So to Our Human, Short-Sighted View! But what willt Thou Do, *Then*, when this Lovely, Little Form, ſhall Grow Stronger, and be Fortified to Endure Greater Sorrows? Since, In the Tenderneſs of its Helpleſs Infancy, when it Required So Great Care to Nurſe it up, Thou didſt uſe It with Such Harſhneſs and Severity! All Soft and Tender as it is, I See How it Quivers with Cold; And Lies upon The Hard Ground! And Thy Providence has had No Care to Mitigate the Rigour of the Seaſon, Nor to Diminiſh the Severity of Its Diſtreſſes: The Sacred Virgin is In ſuch A Miſerable State of Indigence, that She has hardly what is Sufficient to Cover Thy Nakedneſs; The Stable, where Thou art Laid, How Is It, All, Expoſed to the Wind and Weather! Without A Spark of Fire to Warm Thee; And where Nothing is to be Seen, but An Extremity of Want, And An Univerſal Privation of every thing that's Neceſſary or Convenient.

II. Thou Leaveſt not thy Work Imperfect, Moſt Divine Saviour! As Thou haſt Begun thy Life In Miſery and Sorrow, Thou Traveleſt on, to Its Laſt Period, After the ſame Manner: All Along, Thou haſt Choſen That Self-Denyal which Fleſh and Blood Abhors ſo much! For, How Often has the Morning Sun Beheld Thine Eyes Swollen In thy Head; And Thy Viſage

Pale and Wan, with the Pinching Cold and Froſtineſs of the Night! How many Times, Thy Hair and Thy Veſtments Moiſtened and Wet with the Rain and Dew! How often Has Thy Precious and Tender Body been Bath'd In Sweat Under the fatigue of thy Pilgrimage and Journyings to Seek That which was Loſt! Thou Saweſt, when Thou Didſt Create The World, and Range the Seaſons In their Proper Order, Thou Kneweſt, *Then*, How Thou ſhouldſt, One Day, be Expoſed to the Sharpneſs of the Winter, the Calentures and Sultry Gleamings of the Summer; And, Thou haſt Witneſſed, By Theſe very Sufferings, that It was thy Choice, And Thou Waſt Prepared for Them, with as Strong an Appetite and Impulſe of Deſire, As the Libertines of the World Are In the Enjoyment of their Delightful Gardens, and Stately Manſions They have Built.

III. O Father, Moſt Merciful to Our Souls! Thou Lord of the moſt Perfect and Eternal Truth! And moſt faithful Companion of Poor Diſtreſſed Sinners! How very Different Art Thou from Thoſe who, Themſelves, Bear No Parcel of The Burden they Load others with! Even Before Thou Couldſt Speak, Thy Sufferings had A Voice; And Teſtified Aloud for Thee! Thou Beholdeſt How I Spend my Days, In Soothing and Indulging this Wretched Body! And, How I Labour with Perpetual Cares, and Auxiety, About That; Even ſo far, As to forget Thoſe Inward and Inviſible Comforts and Enjoyments! Submitting to That very Fleſh which Endeavours my Loſs of Thee for Ever! How I have Yeilded up Into the Arms of ſo Formidable an Enemy without Refuſing him the

the Grant of All He Sought after! By Fatal Experience, I know, well Enough, that, After all my Endeavours to Gratifie His Will, I can Never Satisfie him; But The more I Grant, the more Still He Craves; The More I Spare Him, He is the more Untractable and Inſulting; And, In Return for all my Compliance, and the Surrenders that I make; He Separates Me from Thee, My God, and My Supreme Bliſs! He Debaſes my Soul to Grovel in the Mire; And to Demean It ſelf ſo, as to Purſue thoſe Groſs and Beggarly Enjoyments that Are far Beneath Its Dignity; And will not Suffer me to Prefer Thy Glories In Competition with Its Sordid and Diſhonourable Pleaſures.

O what Great Reaſon have I, then, upon This Account, to Lament and Bewayle my Miſerable Condition! Thou Seeſt Into the Bottom of it, O Lord! Have Mercy on me! And Correct me Not, *In Thine Indignation!* Thou, Only, Canſt Look Into the Inward Receſſes of my Heart, And Behold the Wretchedneſs, which my Soul, Enſlav'd by The Tyranny of my Fleſh, Labours Under! Should I Spend Every Moment of my Life In Penitence and Sorrow, my Repentance would be ſtill Incomplete; A Thouſand Sins would Remain, Still, to be Lamented! And after Each Inſtance of Thy Forgiving Mercy, for what is Paſt, I ſhould have Great Reaſon to Tremble at the Proſpect of my future Guilt.

Help me then, Gracious Lord! And Secure me Againſt my Self! Thou Knoweſt what Reaſon I have to dread Thy Judgment, for having Proſtituted my Precious Time In Con- IV.

triving how to Gratifie the Luſts of the Fleſh, to the Neglect of my Duty In Thy Service; And How I Ought to Bluſh and be Confounded at that Lukewarmneſs with which I Sought Thee, Even when Thou haſt Prevented me with Thy Grace! For, Have I Ever been So Zealous In my Duty towards Thee, Moſt Divine Saviour! As the Worldlings Are In the Gratifying their Malign Deſires! They Uſe No Mean, In their Luxury, about their Apparel, The Magnificence of their Palaces, and Manſion Houſes, In Inventing All poſſible Conveniences and Accommodations; They Spare No Coſt, to Fence Againſt Every Thing that Contradicts their Eaſe; They Stick at Nothing that can Gratify the Cravings of the Fleſh; Whilſt the Poor, The Widow, The Orphan, And Thy Altars, O God, Are Neglected; And Faile, Even In thoſe Neceſſary Articles that they Call for: And, As to my Self, Since my Return to Thee, Invited by Thy Grace; And Even, Since Thou art Entred Into my Soul; What Reception have I Given Thee! What a Room have I Prepar'd for Thee! With what Purity and Cleanlineſs have I Received Thee! O Infinite, and Boundleſs Goodneſs! Who Art So Patient to Forbear me; And So Ready and Eaſy to Forgive me!

Altho' a Single Moment of Thoſe Raviſhing Delights, which Thou Imparteſt to Thoſe that Love Thee, were Infinitely more Precious than All the Pleaſures of The World; Yet the Senſualiſt takes Much more Pains In purſuite of The Falſe and Deceitful Enjoyments, than I have done for Thy True, and Solid Comforts: My Soul is So Pierced, and full of Grief and Confuſion

Confuſion under Thoſe Thoughts, O God! That I am Struck Dumb, And Not Able to Open my Lips unto Thee! Have Pity upon Thy poor Diſtreſſed Creature! To whom Thou haſt been So Bountiful In thy Mercy! I am Labouring, without Ceaſing, To Provide for my Luſts; But Alaſs! It is Little or Nothing that I Do for Thee! And, my Miſeries Are Proportion'd to the Guilt of my Soul, which is So Capacious and Enlarg'd to Evil, and So Smal and Contracted In Reſpect to Good: But Thy Comprehenſive Goodneſs, O Lord, Appears In my Behalf, to Love me, to forgive me, to Hide my Tranſgreſſion, and to Bear with my Weakneſs! For Thou doſt not Expect, In me, that I ſhould Arrive at Thy Perfection! Thou Alloweſt me a Moderate Concern for the things of this World, and Only Reſerveſt the Sincerity and Integrity of my Heart unto thy Self.

V. O When will the Bleſſed Hour Come, when the Vigour and Ardency of my Soul towards Thee ſhall Supply the Weakneſs of the Outer Man! O Thou Divine Love! Who Art Able to Do All Things, Do Thou Rule my Heart, and Work Thy Miraculous Operations There! Lord! Give me an Abſolute Dominion Over my Self! And Altho' I am not Able to Undergo, theſe Trials of Affliction and Self Denyal, According to Thy Moſt Heroick Sufferings and Paſſion, Do Thou Inſpire me With So Inſatiable A Thirſt, After Righteouſneſs, That I may, at leaſt, have the Will, and A Deſire to Do Much for Thee, whilſt Thou art Working out Infinite Bleſſings for my Soul! Take Away, from me, Every Thing that is Superfluous;

And

And Teach me to Give to this Enemy of Mine, Only what is Neceſſary and fitt for It: Turn Thou all my Thoughts towards Thee, Since They Can be Engag'd, with Advantage, On No Other Object, but thy Self! And, Lord, Let thy Providence be Over Every Concern Relating to me; That Nothing May be my Deſire So Much as to Fix my Soul upon Thee, and to Do Thy Pleaſure! What Can I Deſire, Out of Thee, O My Supreme Good! And what Is It poſſible I can Want, when I am fully Bleſs'd with the Fruition of Thee! O Unhappy and Loſt Years! O Life! Miſerably Spent, In the Works of Wickedneſs! what has it Avail'd that They have been Squandered Away, At Such A Diſtance from Thee! Thou Art the Only Refuge to my Soul for its Repoſe and Quiet! The Only Sufficient Cure of All my Miſeries; The Only Certain Relief to Aſſwage my Pains! Why then Doſt Thou not Satisfie me! Un-Lock this Heart! Sound the Bottom of its Corruption, And, Heal Its Old, Inveterate Sores; For, In Truth, O Lord! Such as I am, I am Unto Thee! And Since, I am Already Thine In Right and Juſtice, O Let me be So, Too, In Love, and Union for Ever!

VI. But, Here, Let me Preſume to Ask Thee which Is It, that moſt Torments Thee, The Coldneſs of the Seaſon which Thou haſt Created; or That Froſt and Ice which Thou Seeſt In my Soul! Both of Them Beſpeak Thy Suffering, O Lord! Teach me, *Then*, to Underſtand Thee, and Obey Thee! I well Perceive that Thou Endureſt the Sharpneſs of the Winter to Expiate my Effeminacy and Softneſs;

And

And that Thou didſt Joyfully Undergo that Severe Hardſhip, to Penetrate this Stupid Heart of Mine with the Arrows of thy Love! Alaſs! What will Become of me, O Thou Ineffable Mercy! I Cannot Remember, that, I, Ever, So much as, Paſt One Single Hour of my Life In A fervent Love Towards Thee! Thou Endureſt The Extremity of Cold and Heat, As A Traveller, who Expects to Refreſh Himſelf when He Gets Home; And, when Thou Entereſt Into This Heart of Mine, 'tis On Purpoſe to Repoſe and Reſt thy Self, as In Thine Own Houſe; Thou Wouldſt Willingly find a Tender and Kind Reception, A Soft and Peaceful Reſidence Therein: O That I Might Receive Thee, Always, with a Pure Flame! That I Might Never Drive Thee, *Thence*, by my Dulneſs and Indevotion.

Thou Requireſt Nothing of me, My Gracious Lord! But what Thou Thy Self Wouldſt Do for me; For Thou Haſt Created me for Thy Self! And, Thou haſt Given me a Heart that Can find No Reſt out of Thee! Thou Wouldſt be The Center of All my Wiſhes! And It Appears, that Thou haſt Put me Into this Place of Exile for No other Intent but that I ſhould Aſpire and Breath after Thee! But as Thou haſt Decreed that I ſhould Bear the Burthen of This Life, In View of The Haven I am to Arrive at, Like A Pilgrim who Travels thro' a Dry and Barren Country; Suffer me not to Stay long upon the Road! Ah! Bleſſed Lord! Thou Preventeſt my Wiſhes! I Perceive Thee, *Already* Preſent! I find Thee Within me! Comfort, *Then*, my Broken Spirit; Fortifie It, and Let It Rejoyce from Thy Own

Own Promiſe and Aſſurance, That Thou Art Its *Supreme Happineſs* and *Salvation*.

If, At Any Time, I Seek Thee, and Do not Find Thee, and Thou Deferreſt Coming to me; It is that I ſhould Covet Thee with the Greater Fervency; And that I may the Better Taſt The Sweetneſs of thy Preſence! For, Thou wouldſt Fix Thy Habitation, Thy Reſt and Thy Delight within me; If Thou Findſt my Heart, All Ice to Thee; or Entertaining Any Other Love, Thou Art Jealous to the Quick; But, when the Place is Empty, or Ready to Receive Thee, Thou, *Then*, Lookſt upon thy Self, as Well Rewarded for All Thy Pains: How Often haſt Thou Knockt at the Door of this Heart, without Its Being Open'd to Thee, Thou Eternal Beauty! How Often has It Driven Thee away, after Thou Haſt been Let in! How Many Times have I Rather Choſen to Undo my Self, than to Enjoy Thee! Wherefore Do I Live, My God! If I Live not Unto Thee! Put an End, O Lord, to my Miſery! And Since, Notwithſtanding All My Requeſts, Thou haſt, Yet, Endeavoured to find An Entrance Into My Soul; O Let thy Reception be, at Laſt, So Fix'd, So Eſtabliſh'd There, that Thou Mayſt Never more depart, from Thence, for Ever!

VII. Come Thou, My Hope and my Salvation! And Drive away, before Thee, Thoſe USURPERS who have Invaded Thy Right and thy Poſſeſſion: Kindle, there, the Fire of Thy Love; Secure it and Keep It Shutt to Every Other but Thy Self, And, Let Nothing be Tranſacted, *There*, Againſt thy Pleaſure: Above All, O Lord! Truſt me not; For Thou

Thou Knoweſt That In Thy Preſence, I Am Alway's Plentiful In Promiſes, and Wiſhes, And That Out of It I Become Slack In Thy Love; And Slow and Tardy In Performing That which I have Promis'd: Do Thou, therefore, Work Thy Will In me, O Lord, Notwithſtanding All my Reſiſtance; For There Can no Good Thing Accrue to me, But what Muſt Proceed from Thee! Let not the Intention of Thy Goodneſs be Prevented by My Wickedneſs; Re-eſtabliſh that Good Principle that is Deſtroy'd In me; Reſtore me what I have Loſt; And Glorifie, thy Self, In Thy Unworthy Creature; Exerciſe Thy Power In Thine Own Dominion! Take up thy Dwelling In Thy Own Houſe; And Let me Never depart from Thee, who art My God, and My Supreme Felicity.

VIII. Thou haſt Condemned *Adam* to Eat his Bread In The Sweat of his Brows; And, Often, to Reap Nothing Elſe But Thorns where He has Sown Good Seed: Thou, O Bleſſed Saviour, who Art The Second *Adam*, Our True Father; And who haſt No Nouriſhment more Sweet than that of thy Love to Our Souls; Altho' Thou Knoweſt that We, of Our Selves, Can Produce Nothing But Briars and Thiſtles; Yet haſt Thou not, Left off, to Caſt In the *Good Seed of Eternal Life*; And In This Thou haſt Undergone The Puniſhment of Our Firſt Parent, Only with This Difference, that He Suffered for his Own Sin, But Thou for Mine!

But, O Bleſſed Lord! What Benefit Canſt Thou Reap by Our Love! Pardon me, O Lord! Perhaps, I may be too Preſumptuous In My Expoſtu-

Expoſtulation! And it is Sufficient for me to know that Thou wouldſt have me Love Thee! But Since Thou Doſt Ask Nothing Elſe, Why, Then, Do I not Love Thee! It is of Thine Infinite Mercy that Thou Vouchſafeſt me This Love, And Thou Giveſt me the Inclination to Love Thee; And I cannot Say which of The Two Graces is moſt to my Advantage! O Thou God of Love! Who Loveſt me So Tenderly, who haſt Forgot Nothing that Might Engage Thee to me; What Hinders Thee from Accompliſhing That which Thou Deſireſt? How Can I Adore and Love Thee, as I ought, without Thy Own Aſſiſtance; Thou Commandeſt me to Love Thee; Give me, That I may Perform That which Thou Commandeſt; And, *Then*, Lay Thine Injunctions as Thou Pleaſeſt! Burn up thoſe Briars and Thorns which Stifle the *Good Seed*, Thou haſt Sown Within me! Work thy Bleſſed Operation upon this Heart of Earth, And Plant thy Divine Love There; Warm Its Lukewarmneſs and Inſenſibility, and Take it, WHOLE, Into Thine Entire Poſſeſſion! But, at the Same Time, Thou Eternal Lover of Souls! Lodge Thy Treaſures There, For Thou Art The God, who haſt a Will Equally Omnipotent with Thy Power.

O Sacred Mother of God, The Son! In whoſe Undefiled, Virgin Womb, The INCARNATE WORD Was Conceived, and Dwelt So happily Within Thee; O, Ceaſe not to Intercede, for me, 'till Thou Prevaileſt, With Him, for His Grace, to Strengthen me to Perform All *That Reaſonable Service*, He Requireth of me; Since Thou Knoweſt that There is No Salvation for me, But In HIM ALONE. And, O yee Bleſſed Spirits! Yee Denizens of the Heavenly *Jeruſalem!* Yee Sanctified and pure Souls, who Are The *Temple of The Holy Ghoſt*, where He Dwells, for Ever; Remember that ye were *Once*, as we are, *Now*, PILGRIMS and TRAVELLERS upon Earth; Caſt your Eyes upon The Rocks and Dangers to which we are Expoſed; And Beſeech The Lord, that I may alſo, One day, Become The Manſion for Him to Reſt In, for Ever and Ever. *Amen.*

[redacted]

THE Seventh Instance OF THE SUFFERINGS OF Our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

CHAP. VII.

In His Circumcision.

1. THE Blessed Jesus Determined to Begin, Almost as Soon as He was Born, to Tap his Precious Blood; And to Give us, One May Say, The FIRST FRUITS of *That* which He was to Pour out In Such a Stream, to Wash away Our Sins: And, Accordingly, upon

the *Eighth Day*, After He was Born, In Obedience to the COVENANT which God had, Some time, Made with *Abraham*, He Submitted Himſelf to *That Law*, of which Himſelf was The Author, Altho' There were many Reaſons why He ſhould have been Exempt from it: For, In The firſt place, This Covenant of The Circumciſion was Eſtabliſht as a Solemn Declaration of Belief, In The Meſſias, whom The Children of *Iſrael* Expected: Now Jeſus Chriſt, Being, Himſelf, The Meſſias Promiſed; And whom They Waited for; He Could not be Said to Expect or Wait for Any Other; Nor, by Conſequence, be Under any Obligation, to Impreſs upon Himſelf that Token of his Faith and Hope which He had, of Himſelf, by That *Article* of *Circumciſion*.

Secondly, Circumciſion Was the SEAL of the *Confederacy*, and *Alliance* which God had Made with *Abraham*, by which God Almighty did Engage Himſelf to Acknowledge the Poſterity of *Iſaac* for HIS CHURCH; And, that *This People* ſhould have No Other God, but the *God of Abraham*, and *Iſaac*; All Other Nations of the Earth having been *Reprobate* and *Rejected*, Becauſe of Their Idolatrie: But Our Bleſſed Saviour, *That Good Shepherd*, being Come to Re-collect All The Nations of The Earth, without Diſtinction, Into One and The Same FOLD; And to Save Every Soul that would Live and Die In the True Faith and Love of Him; He had Nothing to do, to take, upon Himſelf, that Badge of A *Covenant* which He was to Change Into Another, Even that of BAPTISM which In Proceſs of Time He was

to Exhibit to the Whole Race of Mankind, and Spread about the World.

Thirdly, This Sacrament of Cutting off the Foreskin, Bound The Jews to Cutt off, from them alſo, their Hardneſs of Heart, And All thoſe Refractory Diſpoſitions that were Oppoſite to the Love, and to the Law of God: And The Bleſſed Jeſus Being Himſelf The God of *Immaculate Purity* and Perfection; And Himſelf alſo, Come to Cleanſe and Purify the World; He had nothing, In Him, that was to be parted with, on that Account, and Therefore He was Not Concern'd In This Covenant.

Fourthly, As This was A *Sacrament* of an Ancient Date, In which, by the Profeſſion of Faith, and Hope, In A Meſſias, who was to Come; That People were Delivered from the Guilt of *Original Sin*; This Sacrament Suppos'd there Was Such a Guilt as Original Sin, In Being, The Remedy that was Preſcrib'd, to Waſh it off by; But, The Saviour of the World, Who was Himſelf The Author of All *Grace* and *Remiſſion of Sin*; The Lamb; The Immaculate *Lamb of God*, *who Taketh away The Sins of The World*; And, Conſequently Incapable of Sin, as He was God; And, As Man at leaſt, Exempt from any Obligation of taking upon him the Badge and Character of A Sinner, Being Infinitely Diſtant, In his Nature, from Every thing *Peccant*; And, therefore, In Him, It was the Greateſt Inſtance of Humility that Could poſſibly be Given, that He ſhould Condeſcend to Subject Himſelf to A Law that was Eſtabliſht for the Cure of A Malady So directly Incompatible with

with His Moſt perfect Innocence and Incorruption.

II. The Heavenly and Omnipotent ENERGY, whom Nothing Can Withſtand, Determined to Diſcover the Brightneſs of His Power, by Submitting the Godhead Itſelf to A Law So Unworthy of His Majeſty: God is So Comprehenſive, that Nothing Can be added to His Conſummate Attributes and Perfections, And His Excellency and Glory Seems (to Speak after the Manner of Man) Not So Reſplendent when He ſhines forth In His Brighteſt Rays, as when He is pleas'd to hide Himſelf In ſmaller Matters of Condeſcention and Abaſement: Thus The Bleſſed Jeſus has Teſtified the Exceſſive Ardour of His Love to us by Subjecting Himſelf to Our Miſery's; And by Humbling Himſelf Into the Low and Wretched Condition of Our Human Nature; As well as by The Miraculous Inſtances of his Almighty Power and Omnipotence: And, One would think, *This*, Sufficient to Confound A Certain Sort of Pride So Common to the Children of This Generation, who Dare Sin againſt their God without Fear or Remorſe under the moſt Aggravated Treſpaſs; But would appear with Another Gueſs Character Among Men: From whence it Comes to paſs, as The Holy Father has Obſerv'd, that * *They Sin againſt God and their Own Souls without Bluſhing, without Shame, as if their Concealing their Tranſgreſſions from the World Would make Them Clean before God!* But The Bleſſed Jeſus, willing, by his Example to Deſtroy, In us, A Guilt So Unreaſonable, and Unjuſtifiable as This is, Acted after a quite Different Conduct: For altho' there was no-

* Bern. Serm. 1. De Circoncis.

thing In Him but Truth, Purity, and Holineſs; He Even Conceal'd All theſe Perfections, Under the Appearance of Sin; He was Circumciſed as if He had been A Sinner; And He laid hold on the Salve that was to Heal the Sore; Altho' He had No Wound to Cure; No Guilt to be Cutt off; That We Might Underſtand, that He Could not Periſh who paſſed for A Sinner, tho' He, Had No Guilt In Him; But that He who is Really Guilty and Play's the Hypocrite with the World, is Ever Contemptible before God.

III. This ſhews that we Owe a moſt particular Acknowlegement to the Bleſſed Jeſus, upon the Account of his taking upon Him the Pain and Badge of A Sinner by Suffering Himſelf to be Circumciſed; For, In All the Other Myſteries of His Life, as Well as at his Death There Alway's ſhone thro' Every Appearance of Sin, Some Ray of Majeſty that was hidden in Him: At his Nativity, when He Came, Crying and Trembling, Into The World, like the Reſt of Mankind, The Angels, The Shepherds and The Wiſe Men Came and pay'd Him Adoration: When He was Preſented, like the Reſt of the New Born, In the Temple, The Good Old Prieſt, and The Propheteſs, Proclaim'd His Divinity; When He Went to the *Jordan*, among the Reſt of Sinners, to be Baptiſed, The *Holy Ghoſt*, who Appear'd, and Lighted upon Him, In the Shape of A Dove; The Voice of His *Eternal Father*, which was So Diſtinctly Underſtood, and St. *John* the Baptiſt; They All Declar'd and Pronounc'd Him to be the Son of God: When He Suffer'd Himſelf to be Tempted, In The Wilderneſs,

neſs, The Angels of Heaven Deſcended and *Miniſtred unto Him*, as Their Sovereign King; when He was Fatigued and Weakened, and Overcome with Labour, His Miracles Demonſtrated his *Almighty Power*.

When He permitted them to ſeize Him In the Garden of Olives, He Struck Down Thoſe who came to Apprehend Him, with One Single Word; When He was Nailed, between two Thieves, upon the Croſs; The Sun, which Withdrew its Light, The Earthquake, The Loud Voice with which He cried when He Gave up the Ghoſt, The Centurion who Confeſs'd Him to be the Son of God, The Veil of the Temple which Rent In Twain; All Theſe ſo clearly witneſſed to His Divinity, that Thoſe very Men who Crucified Him, upon their Return, *Smote their Breaſts*, and Acknowledged that He was, In Truth, *The Son of God*. Thus, In all theſe Inſtances where He appear'd as a Sinner, He, always, expreſs'd ſomething that diſcover'd the Godhead In Him.

There was No Inſtance, but In his Circumciſion, wherein He ſeem'd to have forgot Himſelf; But *There* Neither Angels, nor Miracles, could Repreſent what He was: Becauſe He was Reſolv'd, *Then*, to Taſte, In every Point, the Pleaſure which He had to Behold Himſelf, In our Likeneſs; And thereby lay an Obligation upon us to Become like unto Him; And, If Afterwards He did Undergo Greater Pain and Trouble; This ought not to be leſs eſteemed by us, ſince, 'twas thro' the Ardency of His Love to us that He ſubmitted to theſe Grievous Afflictions, even So far as Entirely to forget and Lay aſide His own Excellency and Glory.

IV. Tho' the Act of Circumcision had Been of no other Merit than to cause Sorrow in the Flesh; Our Blessed Saviour, for that very Reason, would have Given up Himself unto it; For He came Into the World with so strong a Desire to Suffer for us, that He could not Easily Refrain Himself from going thro' Every Article of Pain and Sorrow that is Natural to Other Children to Endure: Yet the Anguish of Cutting off the Foreskin must needs have been very Quick and sensible, because the Operation was Perform'd with a Knife of Flint, according to what we Read of *Moses*'s Wife In Circumcising of their Own Children, and what God had Commanded *Joshua* for the Whole People, before their Entrance Into the Land of Promise: Common Children indeed Underwent the Stroke without knowing what was done to them, which made the Pain less Afflicting to them; But the Blessed Jesus, who, at that very Time, had his perfect Reason, most sensibly felt the Anguish of That Wound, and let out those few Drops of Blood with the same Fervency of his Love, as He would afterwards Pour it out In Streams upon the Cross.

V. God appointed, In the Old Law, that They should make Oblation to Him with the First-Fruits of All the Product of the Earth: And Because His Blessed Son was to be Born under so very poor and mean A Condition, that He had Nothing He could call his own, not so much as a Place where to lay his Head, The *Eternal Father* Requir'd the First-Fruits of the Blood of his Well-Beloved Son! To This Our Blessed Saviour did Joyfully submit; And Nothing could Prevent his Suffering for us, in so tender

tender an Age; For, on the eighth day of his Life, He Devoted the Firſt Drops of His Precious Blood, which He Ordained to be ſhed, In the whole Maſs, upon the Croſs, And to Stream Out, even after He was Dead, by the Paſſage of His Pierced Side.

Behold what the Bleſſed Jeſus has done for thoſe who paſs their firſt Years in Ignorance; Their Youth In Diſorders and Exceſs; And the Reſt of their Life In a ſhameful Attachment and Devotion to their Luſts: Were but Man, Enlightned by the Divine Brightneſs, He would Behold, Here, what Great Reaſon he has to be Confounded with ſhame to think what Unhappy uſe He has Made of his Redeemer's Great Concern and Love, for him, who has Not Suffered ſo much as One Single Day of his Life to Paſs Away, without ſome Inſtance of his Labour and Suffering for Our Salvation, whereby to Teſtify the Greatneſs and the Sincerity of his Love to us.

VI. It is not Without Reaſon our Bleſſed Saviour Determin'd, that Our Salvation ſhould Coſt Him ſo Dear; His deſign Was, that we ſhould Underſtand how much more He valued us than All Other his Works of the Creation: The Creation of Man Coſt Him No more than That of a Fly; He Made All Things by the Sole Motion of His Will, without Care or Pains: And He would have been but little Concern'd for the Deſtruction of All the Other Part of The Creation: That He has, therefore, done, and Undergone So much to Prevent the total Ruin of Mankind; It is Entirely that We may be Senſible How much He has Loved us; And that tho' Our Creation was ſo Eaſily Completed

by Him, yet our Redemption has Coſt Him An INESTIMABLE PURCHASE; And, from Hence it is that the Holy Apoſtle does Enforce, how we ought to make *Oblation* of *our ſelves*, Body, and Soul, to Him Becauſe He has * *Bought us with a Price.* 'Tis true that Had He So Pleas'd, He might have Redeemed us for leſs; But that which was Sufficient to Purchaſe Our Redemption, was by no Means, Enough to Teſtifie the Strength of his Love; And, He would have Nothing Leſs to Satisfie Him, In this point, than A Life Spun out with Great Sorrow and Affliction, and finiſh'd with a Bitter Death upon The Croſs.

* 1 Cor. 6. 20.

St. *Cyprian* Adds that God would not *Purchaſe* us at a Smal Expence leſt the Eaſineſs of the Price Might make us take the more Liberty to Sin; For, We are So Prone to Evil, that if Our Bleſſed Saviour had Suffer'd leſs In Our Redemption, we had not been Sufficiently Apprized of the Danger, to which we are Expoſed, by Offending God; And if, After All that the Bleſſed Jeſus has Undergone, We Still Run On in Sin with So much Quickneſs and Facility, What ſhould we have Done, if He had not ſhewn us, by the Travail and Afflictions He has Taken upon Him, on that Account, what An Abhorrence and Abomination Our Tranſgreſſions are In His Sight! Let Every One of us, then Examin Into the Diſpoſition of his own Heart, and See thoſe Many Exceſſes He will find there, without Any Shame, Modeſty, or Circumſpection; Let us Conſider, at the Same Time, that The Bleſſed Jeſus has not Spar'd the Very Tenderneſs of his Infancy; And that He Was to Undergo

Undergo A Bitter Death, full of Sorrows and most Opprobrious Revilings, to Satisfy the Longing Desire he had for Our Salvation. VII.

They always Gave the Child its Name at the Time of Circumcision: And, for This Reason, The Blessed Jesus would have it So, that His Sacred Name of Jesus, which Signified A Saviour, should be Written, as One may Say, upon His Flesh with the Same Blood which He should One Day shed for Our Salvation. St. *Bernard* Asserts the Same; According to the Testimony of the Holy Scripture, That This Name was not Given Him, then, as the first Time it was Stampt upon Him, But that He Brought it down with Him from Heaven, and that it was Only Signified upon Him, as Usual, at his Circumcision, Because the Blessed Jesus Being Essentially the Saviour of The World, Ought to take upon Him, at his Nativity, A Name Agreable to what He was: Men Generally Bear the Character of Names which are by No Means Consentaneous to them, Because They are not, In Reality, that which their Names Import: The Names that Imply Richness, Treasure, Majesty, Grandeur, Excellence, and the Like, Are not possibly Referable to Those they are Generally Given to, Because They have not Really Those Vertues, Inhærent In them: But the Blessed Jesus is the TRUE SAVIOUR of Our Souls; He has, By Nature, All that is to be Understood by The Name of JESUS; And therefore He Would, that This Name should be Publisht, upon Him, the very first Day that He shed those Precious, Purple Drops, which were to be the Balm and Medicament

dicament to Anodize and Heal All Our Sores.

VIII. The Holy Prophet (*Iſa.* 9. 6.) had Given Him The Names of *Wonderful*, *Councellour*, *The Mighty God*, *The Everlaſting Father*, *The Prince of Peace*, and Many Others, which are All Included In the Name of JESUS, and Explain the Meaning of that Word: For, In Being The *True Saviour*, He ought to be Ardent and Zealous in Plucking Souls out of the Power and Dominion of the Devil; from The Tyranny of Sin, and from the Darkneſs of Ignorance and Error: He Ought to be A God, Familiar and Converſant Among Men, The Author and Original of Moſt Wholſom and Miraculous Doctrine, In Order to Diſſipate Our Errors: He Ought to Reconcile and Make Peace Between *Heaven and Earth*; To be The *Father of Eternal Life*; To *Open the Gates of Heaven*; And to Reign with His Elect *for Ever and Ever.*

IX. The Son of God, by Taking *this Name* upon Him, has expreſs'd much more Love to Man than We can poſſibly Conceive: At Other Times God would be call'd, *The God of* Abraham, *The God of* Iſaac, *The God of* Jacob, His Faithful Friends and Servants, thereby to do Them Honour and to ſtamp their Eſcutcheon with a Blazon of the Moſt High Deſcent to future Ages; But, *The Son of God*, ſeeing He had ſcarcely Any Friends In the World, derived His Name from His very Enemies, Out of A moſt Gracious Intention to Draw them to His Friendſhip: And In the ſame Manner that God Emblazon'd any of His Servants, by Joyning Their Name to His own, Our Bleſ-

ſed

ſed Lord Alſo, to Dignify All Mankind, And Favour Them as His Friends, However Sinful and Corrupt they Were, Took Upon Himſelf the Name of JESUS, that is The SAVIOUR *of Men.*

Moſes Could Not Glory nor Pride Himſelf more than In Calling Himſelf The Only Friend of God, Becauſe he ſaw Him Face to Face; Nor All the Holy Patriarchs, who Convers'd Familiarly with Him: God has done us greater Honour than All This, by Vouchſafing to Cloath Himſelf with Our Nature; to Live as A Sinner, Among us; to Die Between two Sinful Men, and to be Call'd JESUS, A SAVIOUR, Both In Heaven and upon Earth: From hence His Name is Become Terrible, *Even to Hell*; Glorious In the World; Adorable In Heaven; Sweet and Delightful to the Juſt; Savouring of Health and Life to Sinners; Our Security In Dangers; The Reſt from Our Labours; Our Relief In Want; Our Hope and Expectation In this Pilgrimage; Our Support and Protection In All our Fears; Our Conſolation In Sadneſs; The Fountain of All Good; And The *Remedy* and *Cure* of All Our Miſeries.

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon The Circumciſion of Our Bleſſed Saviour.

BEhold the Inſtant, Thou Divine Saviour ! In which Thou art Going to Begin to Gratifie the Fervency with which Thou Burneſt to ſhed Thy Blood for A Sinful World ! O ! Caſt me Into this Flaming Furnace of Love, that I may ſee There, the Flame which Conſumes Thee ! The Eagerneſs with which Thou Waiteſt and doſt Attend Theſe *Firſt-Fruits* of Pain and Sorrow, which Thou art to Undergoe for Our Salvation ! I Owe Thee No Leſs, O Lord ! for That Love and That Joy Thy Heart Reſents on this Accouut, than for the Afflictions Thou Endureſt, and for the Benefits I Receive Thereby ! Where ſhall We find, O God ! A Love like Thine ! O That My Heart were with Thee, as Thou Draweſt Near to Me ! But, Alas ! 'Tis A Long Time that I put off my Converſion ; I am always Slothful and Unactive in Thy Service ! Thoſe Eight Days were as ſo many Whole Years to Thee, through Thy Impatience to Suffer for My Sake, and to preſent me with The Firſt *Fruits* of Thy Blood ! Thou uſeſt here neither Violence, The Curſes

of

of The Law, Nor Menaces, to Draw Me to Thee!. And Altho' the Law of Circumcision was Not Enacted upon Thy Account, Thou doſt ſubmit Thy ſelf unto it, Becauſe it is *A Law of Affliction*, that I may Come to Underſtand That *Law of Love* which has Rendred Thee A Victim for Sinful Men.

Break with Love, O My Heart! for A God ſo Bountiful In Goodneſs! O Ply Thee, and Expand Thy ſelf Open, that I may Receive Him! Thou makeſt no Difficulty of it, O My God, to Lay Thy Precious Body Upon the Wrack, to Teſtify thy Love to Me! The Tenderneſs of Thine Infancy, The Awful Greatneſs of Thy Majeſty, The Severity of A Law which was not made for Thee, None of Theſe Can Prevent Thee! The more Great and Sovereign Thou art, Independent and Abſolute in Thy Self, the More Lovely Thou appeareſt In this Condeſcenſion to Debaſe Thy Self on My Account: Thy Love is The Only Law which Thou purſueſt; All Thou doeſt is Becauſe Thou Loveſt; All that Thou Endureſt is from Thence; And that Thou Loveſt, is Becauſe Thou art All Love! But, O Lord! Who is This Object Whom Thou Loveſt ſo! There is Nothing In Me that Thou canſt find Worthy of This Love, Unleſs My Sins move Thee to Compaſſion; And find Place In Thee, to prevail for thoſe Ineſtimable Treaſures of Thy Mercy, upon the Exceſs of my Miſery. II.

It was not ſufficient for Thy Love to Take Our Nature Into Thee; To be Born An Infant, poor and weeping; ſubject to Our Miſeries;

ries; But Thou wouldſt Even Appear as if Thou wert like us In Sin, alſo, And Receive, upon thine Immaculate, Tender Body, the Covenant for Sin, Altho' Guilt was So far Diſtant from Thy Nature, that if thou Wert Capable of Sinning Thou wouldſt not be what Thou art.

III. But, As Thou haſt Such an Abhorrence of Sin, How Comes it that Ever Thou ſhouldſt Conſent Only to Paſs for a Sinner. It is The Deformity of Sin that has Made The Infernal Abode So Dreadful; It is The Stain with which *That* has Blemiſh'd and Defil'd the Soul, which has Rob'd us of Our Heaven, and has Made us Odious to Our Selves: From whence Comes it, then, O my God, That Thou, who art the Very Eſſence of Holineſs, Suffereſt, Nay that Thou Sueſt to take Our Sinful Image upon Thee! Not Only In Being Born In the Fleſh of The Firſt-*Adam*, for a Sinful World, but by Submitting to a Cure which Thou Never hadſt Decreed but for The Expiation of Sins! Thou wouldſt be Circumciſed, Thy Self, Altho' Thou didſt Inſtitute This Sacrament, for No Other Purpoſe than That, Sinful Mankind Might Declare, by That *Holy Rite*, their Faith They Had In Thee; And by That Confeſſion of Their Belief, Obtain The Remiſſion of Their Original Guilt: It was Thy Bleſſed Will that Their *Solemn Vow* ſhould be Perform'd by The Shedding of Blood, Becauſe Thou hadſt not Yet ſhed Thine own for Them: But as for Thee, O Infinite Perfection, who art The True Meſſias, By Our Faith In whom, and by whoſe Love, We are Saved, Who, Thy Very Self, art The Salvation of Sinners; What Great

Great Care and Pains doſt Thou take to procure the Pardon of Our Sins! I Adore Thee from my Soul, O Thou Heavenly Love, I Adore Thee, O Immenſe Goodneſs! Bleſſed Be Thou In the Incomprehenſible Decrees of Thine Eternal Wiſdom.

IV. Thou Hateſt Sin, but Thou Loveſt Sinners; And, of Thy Good-Will, Thou Endureſt thoſe Afflictions which are Their due; Altho' Thou haſt not the Leaſt part of the Guilt within Thee; Thou haſt taken the Burthen of My Sins upon Thee, that Thou mayſt Undergoe the *Chaſtiſements I deſerve!* And *Therein*, Thou haſt had Greater Regard to My Redemption than thine Own Glory! Thou art ſo High, O God! that Evil cannot Reach Thee; Thou art ſo Pure That Sin it ſelf cannot Pollute Thee; So Holy that its Deformity cannot Hurt Thee; But, tho' 'tis at ſuch a Diſtance from Thee, Thou haſt not omitted to Lay hold upon it! What is it Thou haſt found in me, Thou Boundleſs Love! that Thou ſhouldeſt fix thy Endearments upon me to ſuch a Degree! As Thou haſt done All Things of Thy Self; It is of Thy Self alſo That Thou haſt Loved us to ſuch Exceſs: It is to Gratify Thy Self In This, That Thou haſt Condeſcended to Humble and Abaſe Thy Self ſo Low; That Thou wouldeſt Appear to be what Thou couldſt not poſſibly be, that ſeeing Thy Self Become like to me thro' Thy Love, I might be Able to Comprehend What Thou Art, and How I Ought to Love Thee.

V. O Thou God of Love, who Entreſt Into the Bottom of my Soul, which has made Thee Undergo Such Travil and take ſo much Pains

to

to Diſpel thoſe Clouds of Error and Darkneſs within me! To Abaſe ſuch mad and fooliſh Pride; And to Bring me Back into the Right Way! When I Behold Thy Majeſty, on the One Hand, And Thy Condeſcending Even to the Abaſement of my Poor Condition, On the other; It is *Then* that I perceive, There Could not have been Leſs of thine Almighty Power, Nor of thy Holineſs, Nor of Thy Love, to Heal, and Save me than there was! Enlighten mine Eyes, O Thou Mirrour of All Divine Perfection! That I may Learn to know my Self, by Looking Into Thee! That I may Abaſe my Self upon the View of Thy Brightneſs; That My Contrition may be Pleaſing In thy Sight; And that, In thy Good Pleaſure, I may be Enlighten'd with New Knowledge, to Perceive that All My Happineſs Conſiſts In being Wholly taken up In Thee, As Thou Art, So Entirely, Sacrificed to Recover My Soul.

If It be a Great Argument of thy Love, that Thou wouldſt Appear, as A Sinner, altho' It was not Poſſible for Thee to be So; Is it not an Intolerable Inſtance of Pride in me, to be Willful In Sinning Againſt God, and Endeavour to play the Hypocrite and Conceal it! To be Fond of my Sores; And to be Aſham'd of the Medicament that Would Heal them! To be Deſtitute of All Vertue, And to Covet to be Accounted Upright! Root Out and Deſtroy theſe Contradictions, In me, O Lord! I cannot Deny but that Sin is Ignominious, Since I am Aſhamed to Appear In Wickedneſs And Yet I Am So Ardent In the Commiſſion of it, As if it were Honourable and of Reputation: I am

I am Aſhamed at the Puniſhment Due to it; And, for Fear the World ſhould take me for a Profligate; But I am at Eaſe within, and In Secret, when I Gratifie my Luſt, In Offending Thee! I Repair, at the Hazard of my Blood, the Reputation that is taken from me, When any One, Speaks the Truth of my Real Character; And, All my Care is to be That Very Perſon In my Works, which I cannot Bear the World ſhould Repreſent me. O Unaccountable Blindneſs and Folly! O Deplorable Contradiction! To Doat upon the Sin that Murders me; And to Hate the Confeſſion that would Heal me! To Give up my Self to the Charms of Sin that I may taſt its fatal Pleaſures, and to feel no Touch of Remorſe, Only for Fear I ſhould thereby find the Means to Cure me! So that Both my Love and Hatred of It, are of an Equal Miſchief to me; Since I am Always Eager after that which I Cannot Juſtefy; Nay which I Hate at the Same Time that I purſue it, and Continue to Indulge In it.

This Irregularity, within me, is the Parent of Another, which is not Leſs Unreaſonable: I am Perſwaded, In the moſt Eſtabliſht Faith, that Thou art my Supreme Lord; And that Thou Beholdeſt me, In Every Reſpect: By Experience I am Senſible, too, that, The Reſt of Mankind who See me, like my Self, are Weak and Miſerable Creatures! 'Tis my Firm Belief that I am Obnoxious to the Sentence of Eternal Death, to which I may Juſtly be Condemn'd; And that it is not In The Power of Man, *Thus*, to Kill The Soul, However it may be Guilty; But Only to Deſtroy the Body, VI.

for a Time; I know that I am, In Truth, That which I Appear before Thee; And not what I Repreſent my Self to the Eyes of Men; And that I cannot Make my Self, with All my Masks and Verniſh, Better than I am; And, Notwithſtanding I am So Conſcious of all This, I am not Aſhamed, to Appear Before Thee, O my God! In The Very Deformity of my Guilt; And to the World In a Falſe Shape, Againſt the Very Convictions of my Own Conſcience.

And Yet, After All, I cannot hide the Corruption of my Heart from my Self; tho' I Ceaſe not to ſet my Self with ſuch an Honeſt and Exemplary Outſide to the World: I Study how to Act the part of Honeſty and Vertue, whilſt I am, within, fill'd with Immorality and Lewdneſs; I would have the World take me for A Perſon of Modeſty and Humility, whilſt A Secret Pride and Haughtineſs Actuates My Soul; And, Under the Mask of an Unbyaſs'd, Holy Zealot, I Conceal the Spirit of an Immoderate and Extreme Ambition: In A Word, I Cover my Vices Under the Appearance of Vertue; And All theſe Wounds are So much the more Deſperate, Becauſe they are Cruſted Over, as if they were Healed.

But, all this While, I am not Speaking of thoſe Sad, Unhappy Dayes, In which I Gave my Self up to Vice and All the Irregular Exceſſes of my Luſts, Even to that Degree, as to have no Longer Any Check upon my Soul when I Offended my God; But Even Ridiculed and Made a Jeſt of Thoſe, Whom I See willing to Leave off their Debauchery's and Return to their Duty; When I Prided my Self In my Deſtruction

ſtruction, and Gloried In my ſhame: I have been Deaf to the Voice of Truth, which Condemned my Falſehood; Diſobedient to The Light which Diſpell'd the Clouds of Ignorance and Error In me; without Either Fear or Regard to Any thing, whatever, that Might Reclaim me to my Duty: If I was, at any time, as A Chriſtian, to have Recourſe to Any Solemn Rites of The Church; The Root of Evil was, for all that, left In my Heart, to Grow and Sprout Still; The Principle and Foundation of Perdition was Still Remaining; And So Wretched and Undone was my Condition, to Chooſe, to Doat upon Deſtruction Rather than to Seek the Salvation of my Soul.

O Heavenly Patience! Who Underſtandeſt All my Miſeries; All thoſe Circumſtances of A Wretched State that, In the Confeſſion of my Sins, I Lay before Thee; Who haſt them All preſent to Thee, at that Very Inſtant, when Thou art Suffering for my Sake; And who art Preparing, this Very Moment, to Support me, to Waite for me, to Receive me! Thou Seemeſt to be paſt Hopes of Ever Seeing me Yeild to the Cure of my Wounds; And, for fear They ſhould be fatal and Bring me to my Grave, Thou haſt, Already, taken the Medicament Into thine Hands to Cure Them. What Return of Love! What Acknowledgement Do I not, In Gratitude, Owe Thee! Let my Whole Soul be Immerg'd and Swallow'd up, O Lord, In the Ocean of thy Mercy's! But O How ſhall It be Capable of this Bleſſing, Since it is No Leſs Plung'd In the Abyſs of its Own Miſeries! Nothing Strikes So Quick upon thine Ears As the Voice of my Tranſgreſ- VII.

ſions; Affected by Such Shrieks as Theſe, Sometimes Thou haſt Subverted whole City's and Even Entire Kingdoms; And Struck down Thouſands of Apoſtates Præcipitate to Hell! But Now, Thou Deliverest, Thou Saveſt us, Thou takeſt upon thy Self the Puniſhment We have Deſerved, And Beholdeſt us In thy, Goodneſs; Thou forgiveſt us In thy Compaſſion; Thou Doſt Succour and Aſſiſt us In thy Love; Thou Doſt Incorporate and Unite us Into Thy Self, Even So far as to Cloath us In thy Nature, that we may be Saved by thy Merits.

Is it Poſſible, Moſt Divine Jeſus! That thou ſhouldſt Suffer On my Account; And that I ſhould Continue In my Tranſgreſſion Still! O Thou Fatherly Compaſſion! Pitty this Prodigal Son! O Thou Divine Perfection! Cleanſe This Leper! O Life Eternal! Raiſe me from this Death! Let One Drop of thy Precious Blood Fall upon me, that All Thy Creatures may Glorifie Thee, whilſt they Behold In Thee, by my Converſion, Such an Almighty Power, Couchant In Such Weakneſs; And may Underſtand that, However like us thou Appeareſt In the form of A Sinner, Thou canſt Change the Wicked Into Saints; And ſo Bring it about, that The moſt poor and Wretched of thy Creatures ſhall Become, In Thee, the moſt Rich, and Happy, and ever Bleſſed: Sanctifie us Exceedingly, O Lord! Becauſe Thou Suffereſt Above Meaſure and *Loveſt much!* Thou haſt Aſſured us that * *Much Will be Forgiven Him that Loveth Much:* Since therefore Thou art Labouring under ſo Great Pain and Travail, upon my Account, Grant me to perceive

* St. Luke 7. 47.

ceive the Sweetneſs of Thy Love thereby; Shed and Diffuſe it, thro' my Heart, In ſuch a Meaſure, that All my Treſpaſſes may be forgiven.

VIII. No, my Saviour! Thou haſt not taken The Name of JESUS upon Thee with ſo much Pain and Sorrow, and Shedding of thy Blood, that Thou Mighteſt be Deaf to the Voice of my Miſeries! Before that Thou waſt Born, Thou didſt Command An Angel to Declare That Thou wouldſt be Called JESUS, Becauſe Thou wert Come down to forgive Sins: Behold A Sinner at Thy Feet, my dear Saviour! If Thou didſt Suffer from the Eighth day of thy Life, that Thou mighteſt be able to Continue on, Thy Sorrows and Afflictions, afterwards; And If Thou doſt Already take the Name of SAVIOUR upon Thee, the Sooner to Begin thy Labours for our Salvation; Begin, then, Thy Work In me Moſt Dear Lord! I will Ask Thee Nothing more! Thou Knoweſt the Cravings of my Soul! Do Then as Thou Pleaſeſt! It is Sufficient for me, that thy Sacred Name is the Emblem of thy Work! With *That* will I Run thro' All Trials whitherſoever Thou wouldſt have me! It ſhall be written upon my whole Soul; It ſhall be the Conſtant object of my Eyes; I will Hear No other Muſick; Nothing but That ſhall Entertain my Senſes; And I will Stamp it upon my Heart! By This I ſhall become Formidable to Hell; And Fright away Evil Spirits; Be Known to the Bleſſed Souls In Communion Above; And by This Badge ſhalt Thou Thy Self Recogniſe me to be of Thy Fold! Thou Wouldſt not be my Saviour If I were not A Sinner; And I have Treſpaſſed Againſt God, That Thou

mighteſt be my Redeemer; For what is it that This Thy Name, This Jesus, Signifies, if it does not tell me that Thou art My Salvation! Thou art Jesus, Becauſe thou art a Saver of Souls; And Thou art My Jesus, Becauſe I am A Sinner!

Sing, O Sinful Soul; The Songs of *Jeſus* his Mercies! Caſt off thy Fears of Every Creature; And, Be no longer Apprehenſive of This Saviour! O Sing with Love, whilſt He is In the Manger! For you ſhall change the Tunes of Joy Into a Dirge, when He ſhall be Stretch'd upon the Croſs! Let not now the Subject of your Song be Sin, But only Warble out the Glories of His Sacred Name! O ſweet Jeſus! O moſt Amiable Saviour! O Heavenly Redeemer! O Saviour! *Who art Fairer than The Children of Men! The Deſire of the Everlaſting Little Hills*, and the Companion of my Pilgrimage! O Saviour! My Father! My Friend! My Lord! My King! And my All! Take thy Reſting Place In my Heart, which Breaths and Pants with Deſire After Thee! And, which is on Fire with thy Love! It's true that 'tis the Heart of A Sinner that I preſent Thee; But Thou art My Saviour! Ah! Bleſſed Lord! My Strength Faileth me! And Since I cannot Utter what my Love would fain Expreſs; Do Thou the Rather Plead for me, O my God! And make me to Underſtand thy Sacred whiſperings within me!

O Thou Bleſſed Mother of Jeſus! How Rich art Thou In the Fruition of This Saviour! Enrich my Poverty and Aſſiſt my Wants, Out of the Treaſures Thou Poſſeſſeſt In and thro' Him! O Ye Bleſſed Inhabitants of Heaven; Yee Celeſtial Court; Who Attend the King of Glory, and Saviour of the World; Who Joy In the Fruit of his Labours, and Whoſe Felicity it is to See God; Receive me Into the Joyes of Your Communion; That I Alſo may be Diſſolv'd In the Pleaſures of His Glory! And Partake with You In the Full Poſſeſſion of Him to Endleſs and Eternal Ages. *Amen.*

THE Eighth Inſtance OF THE SUFFERINGS OF Our BLESSED SAVIOUR.

CHAP. VIII.

In His Flight into Egypt, *and* Herod's *Perſecution.*

I. OUR Bleſſed Saviour Diſcover'd not Himſelf, by His Divine Inſtructions to the World, for the Space of Thirty Years, Any Otherways than by His Exemplary Life: During All that Time, He Forbore to Promulge His moſt Holy Doctrine, which His Immenſe Wiſdom knew moſt proper

per for Him to Inculcate Into Men, In the Latter Period of His Life: And, particularly, He Deferr'd thoſe *Divine Diſcourſes*, he was to Preach, till that Time, that His Evangelical Sermons might be the More Efficacious; That Thoſe Sublime Precepts, which were ſo Claſhing and Contrarious to Senſual Nature, Might Become More Soft and Grateful; That The Deceitful Suggeſtions of the Fleſh, and the World, might be more Solidly Evinc'd; And that He might thereby Render Our Slothfulneſs and Indifferency, In Matters of the Greateſt Importance to us, the More *Inexcuſable:* For, Mankind, being Loſt, and Quite Gone out of the Road to Happineſs, could Not poſſibly Recover the *Strait* and Sacred Path of Life, by the Example of the Inviſible Creator: According to that Expreſſion of the Father, where He tells us that The Bleſſed Jeſus took Our Nature Upon Him, * *that Mankind might, at the ſame Time, have A Viſible Image, of his Own Subſtance, and the Incomprehenſible God for his Guide*; But, Becauſe Example is more forceable to prevail with us to Good than Precept; The Son of God having Appeared In the Fleſh, ſpent thirty Years In the Setting us A Pattern by his Own Life and Practice; whereas He Spent No more than THREE In Preaching and Inſtruction: It was Inconſiſtent with the Notion and Quality of a Saviour to loſe a ſingle Moment, without ſome *Actual* Steps, in His Courſe for Our Redemption; And, Therefore, He Began the *Important Work* from the Moment He was born, And Went on afterwards, In A Conſtant Pattern

* *Lib.* 3. *de Trinit. C.* 3.

tern of Life, In direct Oppoſition to the falſe Notions and Maxims of the World.

The Common Spring, whence the moſt Erroneous and Miſtaken Maxims of the World Ariſe, is, that Men, ſo ſoon as they Come to Years of Underſtanding, and to be Capable to Diſtinguiſh things, Generally take Into that Way which they find moſt Free and Beaten; and Either Chooſe or Reject, According to the General Vogue and Faſhion of the World! *There* they fix their Eyes; This Way they Bend, thro' the General Byaſs of their Life; From Hence they form their Projects of Growing Great; And Laying Foundations to Eſtabliſh themſelves In Eaſe and Pleaſure; From hence 'tis they Propoſe to Gratify their Senſes, and Indulge their Appetites and Paſſions; And look upon't as a ſufficient Excuſe, For All This Exceſs In their Conduct, to ſay That They Live In A World where Vertue is not In Faſhion; That they muſt Live and Act like other Folks: And from Hence comes All that Coldneſs and Indifference In Our Love of God; That Degouſt and Surfeit In Matters of Religion; That Forgetfulneſs of God; And many other Enormities which fill up the Scene of Life: All theſe Miſchievous Evils Grow, at laſt, ſo Habitual and Cuſtomary, that Nothing Can be Imagin'd more: And this Hardneſs of Heart is the Foundation of a World of Sins, and the very Introduction Into A Reprobate State: For altho' the Path, which leads to Heaven, be ſurrounded with a thouſand Dangers whereby A Man may be Undone; yet there is None, even among the Greateſt, that Can be met with al, like That of Beginning Green,

Green, and taking the firſt Tincture and Imbution, from this Supine and Careleſs Neglect of our Way to Salvation: For, By this Means, A Man Gives Himſelf up Into his Enemy's Hand; Such too Who Never Sleep, to Plant their Snares, and to Trepan him Into the Commiſſion of the Greateſt Treſpaſſes before he is Aware.

II. For this very Reaſon the Bleſſed Jeſus, The Mirror of Eternal Truth, Even before the Time when Mankind Generally come to the Uſe of Reaſon, has ſet before us A Pattern of Vertue, In Himſelf, ſo very Oppoſite to theſe Early Inſtances of our Deviation. He was but Two Years old, when He left his Native Country, And the Succour of his Relations, So very neceſſary for his tender Years; He would be tranſported Into a place of Baniſhment, and Expos'd to the Outrage of *Herod*, who purſu'd Him, tho' he knew Him not.

III. The Coming of the *Wiſe-men*, Into *Jeruſalem*, who Inquir'd *Where this New King of the Jews Was*, Occaſion'd This Perſecution: For The Bleſſed Jeſus, Being Born at *Bethlehem*, made Choice of the Shepherds Among the Meaner Sort, to Worſhip Him; And the Wiſe-men Among the Greater: But The Poor, who have not ſo much of The Cares and Concerns of This World upon them; Theſe He ſummon'd by the Mouth of Angels; And The Rich, who for the moſt part, are at A Greater Diſtance from The Kingdom of God; He called Theſe by ſome Viſable Tokens of His Providence to which They were Accuſtomed, and Skill'd In them. For,

As

As The Wiſe-men were Addicted to the Study of the Stars, and Profeſs'd Aſtrology; He ſent A Blazing Star to Guide Them, and Facilitate Their Journey; Thus, God, In the Uſual Courſe of Our Concerns, Condeſcends to the Circumſtances of Our Capacity, and Brings about His Ends, According to what He finds moſt Proper and Conducive to Draw us to Himſelf; And, As An Indulgent, Loving Father, who is Senſable of the Helpleſneſs of his Child, He makes Uſe of Every Thing that may be Inſtrumental to Our Salvation.

There Appear'd, then, in the Sky, A New Star, different in Subſtance, In its Sphere and and Motion, from the Reſt; For, This was not form'd of that Celeſtial, Refined Matter They Are; But, As a Meteor Of Air or Fire; Nor Fixed to the Firmament, But Hanging In The Middle of the Atmoſphere; And Its Motion was not from Eaſt to Weſt, As the Reſt of thoſe Bright Glories take their Courſe; And, Altho' it was Infinitely Small, yet it Appear'd Large becauſe it was nearer to the Earth; And it was ſo exceeding Sparkling and Brillant, that it made the Curious Inquiſitive to Know what it Portended; And Our Bleſſed Saviour, Joyning Inward Illumination to the Star's Splendour, The *Wiſe-men* found it Out, That There was A KING BORN IN JUDEA, to Whom they Ought to Addreſs Themſelves, and Pay Him Divine Worſhip.

But, as They were but little, as yet, Acquainted with The Deſigns of Divine Providence, They Travell'd on, without any other View than to find out This NEW KING,

In

In the Capital City of his Dominion, where they Expected to meet with Great Solemnities of Rejoycings: And Our Lord did not Undeceive Them; But Let them go on without Meeting any thing anſwerable to thoſe Idea's They formed of His Temporal Greatneſs; and that They ſhould take the Pains themſelves to find Him out; That the Difficulties, they Met with upon this Occaſion, be A Demonſtration that the Meſſias was Actually Come, Mankind might Naturally, and of their own Accord, be Quickened and Excited to ſet themſelves forward In Purſuit after ſo Important A Good; And, to ſpeak otherwiſe, Awake out of that Dark Lethargy In which they Lay, In a manner, Swallow'd up! So, when theſe Sages came Into the Holy City, They found Every Thing *There*, ſo Cool and Quiet, that They Not only fell a talking of this *New King*, they were in Queſt of, But gave the Particulars alſo of This Miraculous Apparition, The Blazing Star that They had Seen In the Eaſt, and which had occaſion'd their *Journey and Diſquiſition*.

Now *Herod*, who was A FOREIGNER, was Governour at that Time In *Judea*, According to the Prophecy of *Jacob*, who had foretold that *The Meſſias ſhould Come, when the Sceptre ſhould depart from The Houſe of* Judah, And The Jewiſh Nation who Groan'd under the Tyranny of this Foreign Prince, were ſo far from the Thoughts that their Happineſs was ſo near at hand, and even already Come; that They themſelves were Concern'd for fear of This NEW KING, whoſe Birth which the Wiſemen publiſht, might Prove to be the Occaſion of War

War and Misery upon Them: But No Body was so startled as *Herod*, at this News; At the Enquiries the Wise-men Made In the City of *Jerusalem*, about the Place where the *New King* should be Born: For He Understood by the Conversation He had among The Jews, that They Expected The Messias, to Deliver them Out of Their Oppressions; And, Therefore He was Afraid Left the Rumour, that was Spread about, was the Prelude to his Dethronement: Yet He Dissembled the Anguish of his Mind; He Welcomed these Sages with Great Appearances of Joy, and Consulted the most Learned and Understanding Rabbi's Among the Jews, upon what The Scriptures said about the Messias, under the Pretence of Setting these Sages Right: Upon which, The Doctors of the Law Informed Him that, According to the Prediction of the Prophet *Micah*, † *The King of* Israel *should be Born In* Bethlehem: But, Either Out of Fear, or to Flatter him, They Conceal'd, and Forbare to Tell him The Following Words which prov'd the God-Head of the Messias, and Consequently Render'd All *Herod*'s Precautions Useless and Insignificant; *viz.* where the Prophet says, * *His Going forth hath been from of Old, from Everlasting.*

† *Ch.* 5. 2.

* *Ibid.*

V. From that Moment *Herod* took a Resolution to Murder the Infant JESUS, In his Cradle; And by that means, without Any Noise to Prevent the Mischiefs with which He thought Himself threatned, He took Great Care to Conceal his wicked Purposes under the Mask of ZEAL AND RELIGION; And, as He did not Trust The Jews with any thing of the Matter, because

becauſe it was of the moſt Important Concern to Them to Save Him, He held Several Conferences with theſe Magi; And Ask'd them Several Queſtions about the Manner, the Time, and many Other Circumſtances of this Strange Light, they had Beheld, In the Skie; And what Reaſons They Deduc'd from thence to move them to Undertake So long and Tedious A Journy In Queſt of This *New King*: He told them, He was Sorry that He Could not diſcover, within his Own Proper Realm, what They found out, at Such a Great Diſtance; But He deſir'd them to take *Jeruſalem* again In their way, upon their Return back from *Bethlehem*, that He might Partake with Them, In the Joy, when they ſhould have found Him Out; telling them withal, that He would Prepare Matters, whilſt He Waited Their Return, to Go Himſelf with his Whole Court, to Do Homage to So Great A Prince; And Alſo, that He would take Care to Bring him up In The Royal Pallace of *Ieruſalem*, with All the State and Magnificence that was Due to The Dignity of So Glorious a Monarch.

The Wiſe-men, Upon this, Made Their Way for *Bethlehem*, without the Leaſt Suſpicion of *Herod*'s true Intentions; And without any Perſon Whatſoever, with Them, Either from the Court or the City: For the People were, In General, Infatuate, Inſenſable and Careleſs about *That very Thing*, which was of the Greateſt Moment and Concern to Them: But, They had no Sooner left the City, than the Star Appear'd to them Again, went Before them, and Directed them, at Laſt, to the very Place where the *Royal*

Infant

Infant Lay: Upon The Noiſe They made at their Entrance, the Holy Virgin took her Son into her Arms, as One Would Secure a moſt Valuable Treaſure; And The *Reverend Sages*, on the other hand, being Inwardly Enlightn'd, Proſtrating Themſelves upon The Ground, Adored The Divine Majeſty, Couchant Under the Weakneſs of A *Tender Infant*; and Preſented Him with *Gold*, and *Frankincence*, and *Myrrhe*: But God, againſt whoſe Wiſe Purpoſes and Decrees the Malice of Man Is Entirely Impotent, and can do Nothing, Warn'd Theſe Sages In their Sleep, not to Return by the Road to *Jeruſalem*, upon which They Took quite Another Way, full of Joy, and fruſtrated the Miſtaken Politicks of *Herod*.

VI. Whilſt this Prince waited the Return of the Wiſe-men, and was taken up with other Affairs of State, It was ordered ſo, by the Peculiar Diſpenſation of the Divine Providence, that he ſpent many Days, During which The *Holy Babe* was preſented In the Temple, and then conveyed to *Nazareth*: Matters were thus Manag'd, Not that *Herod* had, In the Leaſt altered his Malicious Purpoſe, But He fancy'd that there was No Such haſt, that he ſhould Neglect his other Affairs upon this Account; And there fell out Every Day ſomething or Other which made Him put off this Intended fatal Viſit, to the *Royal Infant*, who could not, many a Year, be Capable of Oppoſing Him, In his Pretenſions to The Crown: The Eternal Father, who knew the Projections of this Ambitious Prince, Commiſſioned *An Angel* to *Joſeph*, who Caution'd him In A Dream,

Dream, to Retire Into Egypt with the *Sacred Mother*, and The *Heavenly Child*, and to Dwell There Till He ſhould Receive farther Inſtructions.

Theſe Divine Illapſes of Revelation, which Become Viſionary In Our Sleep, are Generally Enrobed with So Strong A Light, as to Impreſs the Object upon the Mind as Deep, as if we Beheld it with Our Waking Eyes: Which Made the Holy Patriarch, of Old, When, In his Dream He Saw that *Myſterious Ladder*, upon which *The Angels of God Aſcended and Deſcended*, Say, with So Much Confidence, In his Viſion, * *Certainly This Place is Holy! God is Moſt Aſſuredly in This Place!* And Thus The Holy Man *Joſeph*, After He had Seen This Viſion, and Received the Meſſage, Heſitated not a Moment, from the Performance of the Divine Will, but up He Roſe, that very Hour, and Departed In the Middle of The Night. * Gen. 28.

VII. It is Eaſy to Obſerve, by What I have been Speaking, How Soon The Bleſſed Jeſus Began to Suffer Perſecution In the World; And How we Ought to Live, upon the Earth, as *Strangers*, who, having No Conſtant Dwelling here, Inceſſantly Breath after That *Everlaſting Abode*, In The Heavenly Country: The Principles of the Terreſtrial Life Deſtroy the very Foundation, and All the Expectations of That which is to Come; which *fadeth not Away*; For, This Laſt is founded upon the Moderate Enjoyment of the *Things that Periſh*: It Allows us the uſe of 'em, In a Temperate Degree, But not to Place our utmoſt Happineſs therein: And, during the whole Courſe of Our Pilgrimage, we Ought

not to Receive them but *en Paſſant*, and by the way, and juſt to Supply our pure Neceſſities, whereas the Tendency of the Senſual Life, is to Glue the Soul to thoſe fleeting Enjoyments which paſs away Like a Shadow, as if It were our Intereſt to Live In a perpetual Forgetfullneſs of God, and A Better World. From Hence 'tis that St. *Paul* Extols the Faith of The Ancient Patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, with Such Large Encomiums. *By* * *Faith*, Says He, *They Sojourned In that very Land which God had promis'd Them, Dwelling In Tabernacles; For They Looked for A City which hath Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God*; They Bravely *Confeſſed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims* on the Earth; And They *Breathed after A Better Country*, which was So pleaſing to God that *He was not Aſhamed to be Call'd The God of* Abraham, *The God of* Iſaac, *And The God of* Jacob.

* Heb. 11. 9, 10, 13, 16.

VIII. Pilgrims are Satisfy'd with a Little; And do not look for that Proviſion, upon the Road, as they Travel on, which they Expect to meet with at their Journies End, and when They are Come Home: The Foundation of All thoſe Sins, Men Commit, And their Attachments to The World, is Laid Here, that They take their Exile for their Home; And Rivet themſelves Here Below to this Tranſitory World, as if they ſhould never Leave it, but were to Live here for Ever: It was The Bleſſed Jeſus his Will, to Undergo the Miſeries of An Exile State Even from The Cradle; The Incommodious fatigue and Tediouſneſs of a Long Journey; The Mean and Poor Condition of his Bleſſed Mother and Reputed Father, who wanted

wanted the Common Neceſſaries of Life, upon the Road, and who were forc'd to Live by the Work of their own Hands, In a Strange Country; For altho' the Hardſhip and Straitneſs of their Condition was much Sweetned, by the Bleſſing of Such a Babe, yet the Neceſſities they Labour'd under were very Grating to Fleſh and Blood, and Sat But heavy upon the Mind.

IX. The Powers of the World purſu'd this *Immaculate Innocence* from his Cradle, even So far as to Rob him of a Life, So Precious and Beneficial to the World; And, All this while, He offer'd Nothing, In Return, to Oppoſe their Inhuman Cruelty, but Sweetneſs, and a Lamb-like Reſignation: He Underwent All with Silence; And Left it to his Enemies to Proſecute their wretched purpoſes againſt Him; And He Even SHADOWED the GLORY of HIS MAJESTY, that he might Undergo their Outrage: It had been Eaſy for Him to have Retir'd Into Heaven, during the Determinate time of his Private Life; But He Rather choſe to Submit himſelf, In a Miſerable World, to all the Inconveniencies of a Difficult and Rugged Exile, that we might Learn, by his Example, to Eſtrange ourſelves, and withdraw from theſe Tranſitory things; And to Conſecrate the Deſerts of *Egypt* by his Preſence, which were to Become, one day, The Retreat for Holy Confeſſors and Devotees to Betake themſelves unto.

And thus it is Almighty God draws Good out of Evil; And, that the very Wickedneſs of Men Becomes the Inſtrument of that GOOD-WILL which He Vouchſafes to the World;

And yet, This Perverſe Generation Will not Suffer Him; They were Bent upon his Deſtruction, from the very firſt Moment of his Life! They Purſued Him, to the Croſs! And, at the very Time that This *Endearing Lord*, Under the Agonies of his Crucifixion, was Struggling with Death upon Their Account, And, In the Extremity of his Paſſion, Expreſs'd his want of Some Little Matter to Refreſh Him, in his Fainting and Convulſions, They Offer Him *Vinegar* and *Gall*! Behold! What A World This is! to which we Devote Our Selves; and Take So Much Pains to Become its Slaves! For which We Sell Our Souls, and Sacrifice Our Salvation! Wretched Infatuation! Strange! Unhappy Blindneſs!

X. The Bleſſed Jeſus has Plainly Evidenc'd, to us, by His Example, that, with Reaſon, The Prophet ſaid, * *It is Profitable for a Man to Bear The Yoak, of Our Lord, In his Youth: Amidſt* the Miſeries of the World, *He Dwelt in Peace, and Continued Quiet, Becauſe He Raiſed himſelf to a Sublimer State*; And Deſpiſing the World, as Below him, He fixt Himſelf cloſe, In the Morning and Flower of his Life, to the Contemplation of God and Heaven: In this ſenſe it is that the Holy Spouſe Says to Her Bridegroom, † *I have laid up for Thee, My Beloved! All manner of Pleaſant Fruits, Both New and Old*; that is, I have Devoted to Thee the firſt Years and Spring of My Life, as well as the Laſt, the Frozen and the Winter part of it: The Royal Pſalmiſt, Uttered Himſelf, alſo, after the Same Manner, In the Preſence of his God, Declaring that He had not put off this Important Affair to the Crazy Condition of his Hoary Years;

* Lam. 3. 27.

† Cant. 7. 13.

Years; * *I have Kept my whole Strength, Says he, For Thee O Lord!* And, Certainly, it is the Greateſt Prudence, to Enrich Our Lives with the Treaſures of Good Works, and Chriſtian Vertues; And, by the moſt Difficult Enterpriſes In Religion, to Expreſs the Strength of our Love to God. Now, Nothing is more Difficult, or Requires more Strength and Reſolution, than to Reduce the Wantonneſs and Extravagance of Wild and Unbridled Youth, Into the Sacred Steps of a Reverend, Pious, and Devout Old Age. * Pſ. 58.

But The Bleſſed Jeſus, would be Offer'd up In The Temple, to God his Eternal Father, and Receive his Bleſſing Before he Retired Into *Egypt*: This ſhews us alſo that We Ought to Give up our whole Selves to God, jointly with the Holy Jeſus, and Conſecrate, and Devote Our Selves Entirely to his Service. XI.

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon The Vocation of The Wiſe-men.

I Will Raiſe My Soul, My Hopes, and My Deſires even unto Thee, My Lord! And My God! Who art the Cure of my Wounds, and The Light of my Darkneſs! For I find, In Thee, All that my Soul can Crave: My Soul! Which Cannot Conceive The Immenſe Riches I.

It may Expect from Thee! Its Expectations are Large; But, It-Self, cannot Comprehend the Mighty Object of its Desires: Its Hopes are Extended to the Utmost; But this All is too spacious and Incomprehensible to Come within the Limits of the Soul's Conception; Its Views are Rais'd to the SPHERE of GLORIES that are INFINITE and UNBOUNDED; But it can by no Means, Reach to the Extent of them! Thou art yet Greater than All This! O Thou God of My Soul! Thou art A Treasure of much more Value; More *Incomprehensible* than *Infinity*, It Self!

When I Lift up my Soul unto Thee, and would Impress upon it Those Idea's that are Worthy of Thy Majesty: Alas! I find Thee, Beyond All Comparison, Greater than ALL SUBLIMITY AND IMMENSITY, that I can Form, or Conceive: I do not Labour, therefore, to Comprehend how Great Thou art, For that were Impossible; But I presume to Hunger after, and Promise my Self that ABYSS of TREASURE And GLORY that I cannot COMPREHEND.

It is Sufficient for Me, Blessed Lord, to be Assured, Incomprehensible as Thou art, that Thou art Mine: And that I am Born, The Vassal and The Creature of This INFINITE and BOUNDLESS MAJESTY and GREATNESS; O that My Worthless, Poor, Nothingness were Lost In the Abyss of Thine INFINITE GLORY: That My Blindness were Swallowed up, and Absorpt In the Splendour of Thy *Divine Brightness!* That My Ignorance were Drowned In this Ocean of Eternal Wisdom! That My Death were Plunged and Immers'd

In

In This Well of Life! My Frozen Heart Melted In This Fire of Love! And All My *Whole Self* Digeſted Into Thy Nature, O Thou, My God, and My Supreme Felicity! For it is In Thee, Alone, that I ſhall find Relief of All My Miſeries, Light unto Mine Eyes, and the Forgiveneſs of My Sins! It is by Thee alone I ſhall be made Clean, and Healed; Enlightened and Conducted Unto Thee!

II. As Thou art Every where, O Lord, it were Eaſy for Me to find Thee, if my Sins had not Placed ſuch a Large Gulph Between us! But I am Driven from Thee on the one Side; And Thou art Eſtranged from Me on the other: Thou art ſo full of Majeſty, ſo Pure, ſo Holy, and ſo Sublime In Glory; And I, Only Dust and Ashes, that I ſhall never be Capable of Coming unto Thee, Unleſs I be Drawn unto Thee! For * *None can Come unto Thee*, as Thou haſt ſaid, *unleſs Thy Father Draweth Him:* How then can I poſſibly find out my Way unto Thee, thro' thy Shadowings and Darkneſs, unleſs I be Enlightned with Thy Bleſſed Inſpiration! How ſhall my Coldneſs be ever Kindled Into the Love of Thee, without a Spark of Thine own Celeſtial Fire! How ſhall I be Ever Able to Raiſe my ſelf out of this Abyſs, In which I am Immers'd, without the Power of Thine Helping Hand to Lift me up! And of what Capacity ſhall *This Nothing* be, without Him who is the Fountain and Original of every Created Being! Take me, then, O Lord, and Draw me up unto Thee; ſince 'tis for this very Thing that Thou art Come Into the World.

* St. John 9.

Thou haſt Beheld me In my Exceſſes; And art Come to put me In the Right Way! Thou haſt ſeen me on the very Brink of Deſtruction, and Art at hand to Save me! Thou haſt obſerv'd the Swiftneſs of my Flight away from Thee, and Thou haſt call'd me Home; Thou art Senſible of my Incapacity to Come to Thee, without thy Helping Hand, and Thou art Come to Seek me, and Stretch it forth unto me: Bleſſed Saviour! My Path, My Truth, and My Life! I am this Wretched, Miſerable Sinner; Empty, and Naked of All Good; Languiſhing under my Burthen; Open, and Expoſed to the Wounds of Sin; Fetter'd, and a Slave to my habitual Corruptions; And, to fill up the Meaſure of my Miſeries, I am Inſenſible of the Wretchedneſs of my Condition, and do not feel my own Calamity; I Live, without Fear or Apprehenſion, In the midſt of Vanity and Falſhood; And I am ever wallowing In the Mire In which I am Sunk; And whilſt I am thus Careleſs and Forgetful of My Self, Thou, My Deareſt Saviour! art full Employ'd, wholly taken up, In Thy Inceſſant Love, In Thy Care and Concern for this ſinful Soul; And Continually ſetting thy Thoughts on Work, How Thou mayſt Contrive the Means to Recall this Wandering, *Loſt Sheep*.

Thou waſt ſcarce Come Into the World, when Thou calledſt the Poor Shepherds; And Didſt Appoint that Eaſtern Blazing-Star to Point out Thy Will, and to Beſpeak and Direct the Oriental Sages Into Thy Preſence; Thou Wouldeſt not be a Moment, In the World, without Concern about our Welfare; without ſome Contrivance to Draw our Souls unto Thee;

with

without Enriching us with Thy Treaſures; without Attaching us near unto Thee; And Thou never wouldſt be Satisfied, but we muſt be *There* with Thee for Ever.

III. Thou doſt not ſtay till I make Overtures of my Love to Thee; till I ſhould Expreſs my Breathings after Thee, and Seek Thee Firſt; Thou waiteſt not till I Enter my Self Into Thy Service; And have done Something Worthy of Thy Notice and Favour; Thou doſt not Regard what Thou findeſt In me; But, Becauſe Thou knoweſt Nothing can be found, There, Nothing can proceed, from thence, that's Good, or Worthy of Thy Notice In me; Thou, Out of Thy Self, doſt Furniſh and Exhibit to me, All that can Excite or Move a Rational Soul, to Joyn in *Working out that Salvation*, for which Thou didſt Diſpenſe Thine All-Powerful Aſſiſtance and Thine Exciting Graces unto me: It is Entirely of Thy Goodneſs, O Lord! *Wholly*, out of Thy Bounty, that Thou ſo Regardeſt me; In the Soft Whiſpers of Thy Voice, and not with Any Violence, Thou Draweſt me unto Thee; And, All That Thou Requireſt is but only that I would Receive and Entertain Thee, And Suffer my Soul to be Attracted, and Draw near to Thee! O that I had never ſtopt my Ears; That I had been never deaf to Thy melodious Voice! That I had, at Leaſt, been Second, and Anſwered Thy Courtſhip, ſince I was not ſo Wiſe as to Begin; That I had but Senſe enough to follow Thy Bleſſed Steps, ſince I have not the Power to be Before-hand with Thee, and to ſeek Thee firſt: That I had but Let Thee go on, and never Contradicted or withſtood Thee, In what Thy

thy Sacred Love Sued for! Then ſhould I ſoon have been Agreeable, to thine Eyes, Acceptable In thy Sight, and juſt Such as Thine own Self Couldſt Wiſh me!

Thou didſt Summon the Eaſtern Sages, O Thou Enlightening Grace! by the Refulgence of A Material Being; But, at the Same time, Thou didſt Inſpire Them with an Impulſe to find Thee out, by an *Inward Call and Illumination:* And, Altho' Thy Majeſty Lay Concealed, Under the figure of a *New Born Child*, Wrapt up In Swadling Cloths, In a Sorry Stable; Yet, for all that, Thou didſt put it In their Hearts to ACKNOWLEGE THEE; To WORSHIP and ADORE Thee, as their KING and Their GOD! It was THERE All their Thoughts of this World were Swallow'd up; That Their Wiſhes Soar'd up, on high; That They Conſecrated their Souls to Thee; that They Gave up Themſelves, and Submitted All their Liberty and Freedom to *Thy holy Law*, And Entered Into thy Service; That They Caſt their Aſtoniſht Eyes Upon Thee, as In the Proſpect of their moſt Ineſtimable Treaſure; And That Thou didſt Look on Them, as on the FIRST-FRUITS of the Gentiles, In whom Thou didſt Begin to take Poſſeſſion of Souls, whom Thou wert Come to *Seek out*, upon the Earth; Thou haſt Called Them O Lord, Thou haſt been their Guide; Thou haſt Communicated thy Secrets to Them; Thou haſt fullfilled All their Deſires; And Thou haſt Repleniſht their Hearts with joy and Conſolation.

IV. What Returns of Acknowlegement Ought we not to Render Unto Thee, O Lord! For All the Benefits Thou doſt unto us, Even when we

ve Leaſt Deſerve it, and leaſt Think on't! How often have I felt my Soul *Quicken'd* and Awaken'd by thy Light, and Enflam'd with the Fire of thy Love! Then, for that Little Time, I drew Near to Thee, I Met Thee; But Alaſs! In a Moment Afterwards Again, I Loſt Thee! Somtimes I hold Thee faſt, I Embrace Thee; And, In an Inſtant, Thou art Gone! Often, when I think my Self Acceptable in thy Sight, I find, upon Examination, that I am, In Truth, In a Condition to Deſpond as an *Abject* and a *Caſtaway!* And, In this Continual Change of Inward and Succeſſive Diſpoſitions, I Betake my Self, Somtimes, One Way, Then Another, to find out THAT, After All, which may Conduct me unto Thee! But, as a Creature of no Underſtanding, I wander about In *Darkneſs*; And Oftentimes, I loſe my Self, for Want of knowing the Way I Ought to take; I Sigh after Somthing, But I Know not what I'd have! My Soul is Captivated, but Yet I Can Neither fix nor Meet the *Object* of, *My Love!*

Thus My Soul, by Degrees, Loſes the Very Expectation of Its Hopes, without Ceaſing, Yet, to Place a Sort of Dependance on Thee; And is Conſcious, by what it Feels, that Its Deſires are Strong, But Its Performance Nothing; Thou, Lord! Knoweſt Its Troubles, And Thou Seemeſt not to Obſerve them, to This happy Moment, when, Labouring and fatigu'd Under Such an Oppoſite Viciſſitude of Oppreſſions, It falls, at Laſt, Into an Entire Miſtruſt of it Self, And Then Thou Sheddeſt Thy Light upon it; And It Begins to See the *Right Path*, even to Behold Thee who art

The

The Way of Peace, *The Truth* and *The Life*! *Then* it finds that Thou wert Nearer to It than It Conceived; And how Very Eaſy it had been to Find Thee! It Sees, I know not how, But, of a Certain Truth and without the Leaſt Room to Doubt it, that it was Thou, Lord! Who didſt Call and Invite it to Thee, Thou doſt Inform it, All at Once, without Speech or Voice; So that it Can Think on Nothing but its *Dear, Sacred Object*, In which It is wholly taken up; It Totally Rejects and Throws off All Senſual Conſiderations; And has no Other Entertainment for the Fleſh, but Contempt and Scorn, and the Rigours of Mortification; And thus It Inceſſantly Advances, and is Puſhing forward, Till at Laſt, It Arrives at the Goal, Even Unto Thee, O Lord! Inſenſably, and without Perceiving its Own Gradation and the Steps it takes: Then It Takes hold of, and Poſſeſſes Thee! And Yet It, Still, Purſues thee In Freſh Delights! And The more it Graſps, After Thee, the Leſs it Comprehends Thee! If Thou Commandeſt the Soul to Enter In, It Preſently Obeys: If Thou Requireſt She Should Depart, It will never Leave Thee! It Sees Thee Plain, but Viſion Cannot Comprehend Thee! It Underſtands that Thou art There, But what Thou Art is paſt its Reach; And It only knows who the Beloved is to whoſe Voice ſhe Liſtens: And as thine Incomprehenſible Glory it Beholds Cannot poſſibly fall within the Limits of ſenſe, And He whoſe Charms it Hearkens too, whiſpers only to the Souls without a Voice to Strike upon the Ear; It ſets itſelf Down In Peace, Raviſh'd with the Delights of thy Love, And its Sacred Paſſion

Grows

Grows Still Stronger, And is for ever in its Increaſe! Words cannot Expreſs, nor the Soul it ſelf Comprehend, what it Receives out of the Treaſures of thy Love, Moſt Dear God! Even In This Place of Baniſhment, This Miſerable World.

O How happy is this very Moment, Moſt Sacred God! How pure and Tranſparent is this Light! How Ineffable The Illapſes of thy Divine Grace and Love! Thou, Lord! Knoweſt how very precious and Ineſtimable theſe Gracious Gifts of Thine are; And thy Creature who Receives Them Knows it alſo! Oh! That my Faith Were Stronger; That my Soul Might Never more be Divorc'd from Thee! That It might Never Deviate, But be So wiſe as to Preſerve and Never Part with the Grace It has Received from Thee! That it Might be for ever Happy! And Yet This is but As *One Drop* out of that BOUNDLESS OCEAN of JOY AND TREASURE which Thou wilt, One Day, Beſtow upon it.

O Thou Perfection of My Soul! What is This Soul of Mine! And what Can There be That's Good or Valuable In It, when it is leſt Naked to itſelf, and without Its God! O Thou Life of my Life! What's This Life of Mine, Unleſs I Live In Thee! Is it Poſſible That This Heart of Mine ſhould be Capable of Enjoying the Ineffable Tranſports of Thy Sweets; To be Joyned to Thee, In the Moſt Perfect Union; To Stretch and Dilate itſelf In thy Fruition even to the utmoſt of Imagination or Deſire; And Yet, After all, that It Can Poſſibly Become So Miſerable out of Thee! Thy Devoted Creature! That It ſhould be So able to V.

Raiſe

Raiſe itſelf So high above its Own Nature; Take Its Lodging in thine Arms, and after that, to Abandon Thee, to Wallow In the Mire, and forget The Treaſures Thou haſt In Store for Thoſe that *Wait for Thy Appearing*! O Thou Lover of Solus! Who art Both All-Sufficient, and of Infinite Goodneſs to Impart the Treaſures of thy Merits Equally among the whole Race of Univerſal Mankind; Who haſt Aſſumed So many Different States of Life, Only to Conform thy Self, and to Become Agreeable to their Different Taſts and Diſpoſitions; Can Any One Approach Thee, and Behold the Inſtances of thy Endearments, and not be Raviſh'd with The Love of Thee! Who Can Hinder Thee from doing as Thou Pleaſeſt; or Contradict or Oppoſe what Thou doſt.

Create Myriads of *Lights* more; And Let every Creature have its Guiding Star, if Theſe Glories are So Requiſite to direct us unto Thee! Let the *Bright*, *Heavenly Hoſt* Deſcend in Swarms! And, Every Quarter of the Univerſe be Throng'd with Angels, that Each Wandring Soul may meet with its Bright Genius to Lead Him Unto Thee! But Rather Come Thou, thy Self, my Deareſt Lord! And Enter Into theſe Clodded Hearts; Shedd thy Sacred Light upon Our Giddy, and Infatuated Souls! Lift up the Glory of thy Face upon Our Wandering, bewilder'd Minds; Emit that Sacred Fire with which Thou, thy Self, art Conſumed; that The *Enlivening* Sparks may Spread Around; And we may be Encircled In the Seraplick Flames. To what purpoſe do I Enjoy this *Free-Will* that Thou haſt Beſtow'd upon me, Unleſs I make uſe of it to Engage my Soul to Thee!

Thee! Ah! Bleſſed Lord! I do not Know how to Expreſs my ſelf Unto Thee; But Oh! Hearken to the Voice of *Thine own Love*, and the *Shrieks* of my *Sorrows*; Let theſe Plead for me; And Come, Thou, And take up Thy Abode, and Dwell for Ever in me; And Grant that I may Ever Live in Thee and for Thee, as *In* and *Thro'* Thee I have my Motion and my Being.

VI. Wretched and Miſerable is that Sinful Soul that has ſeen The Glory of Thy Brightneſs, and Sunk again into its former Ignorance and Darkneſs; Which has felt the Warmth of Thy Love, and yet reſumes its former Coldneſs; That has Receiv'd the Forgiveneſs of its Sins, and Returns to its Old State of Sin and Wickedneſs; who has been Prevented by the Bleſſings of Thy Divine Sweetneſs; Raviſh'd with the Charms of Thy Beauty; and Relaps'd again into a Forgetfulneſs of God, The *Supreme Good*; Which Fortifies it ſelf With Clay; and Returns, like the Dog, to his Vomit: O Thou Moſt Excellent Perfection! who Beareſt with theſe Wretched Inſtances of Ingratitude, who art Waiting for me, Who Charmeſt me, Unto Thee, And ſtill Preventeſt me! I Bewail, before Thee, In the Bitterneſs of my Soul, All theſe fatal Miſcarriages and that Unhappy Guilt which my Conſcions Soul is Labouring, and Struggles with.

It is with Juſtice Thou Delivereſt me up to mine Enemies, to my Vices, to my Paſſions; And, that Thou Suffereſt me to be Puniſh'd and Confounded, by Every Tranſgreſſion that has ſeparated me from My God! Since, after having been Introduc'd Into the *Vaults where Thy Delicious Wines are kept in Store*, I have ſought

ſought how to Quench my Thirſt In the Puddles of the Earth: I Refuſed to Dwell In Thy Manſion; And, by a Juſt Judgment, I find my Self oblig'd to Beg from Door to Door, among Strangers, where I meet with Nothing that can Satiate the Hunger I Endure: Since I have ſhunn'd Thy Dear Embracements: O Thou my Soul's Bridegroom! It is fit that I ſhould be Trodden under Foot by my moſt cruel Enemies! Since I have been ſo Unfaithful about taking Care to Keep and Maintain Thoſe Graces Thy Bounty has Beſtow'd upon me; It is but juſt, and with Reaſon, that Thou ſhouldeſt Deny me, in my Requeſts, and Refuſe what I Ask for: For This, I know, it is, that I lift up my Voice, and Thou doſt not Hear me; I importune and Thou doſt not Reply! Yet, O Lord! Notwithſtanding All my Perfidiouſneſs, Thou Art ſtill, and for Ever, My *True*, My *Dear*, My *Faithful* Friend! Thou art *The Good Shepherd of This Loſt Sheep*; For Thou haſt not yet, caſt me, Precipitate, into Hell; Nor given me up to the Rage of Devils! Thou haſt not, yet, Condemned me Beyond the Gulph; into a State of ETERNAL SEPARATION from Thee; Thou haſt not Given me up to my own Extravagances; Lord! Bleſſed be Thy Name for Ever!

I Ask Thee no more thoſe Particular Showers of Thy Favour Thou Diſpenſeſt to Thy Faithful Servants; All that I deſire of Thee, Moſt Gracious Lord! is, That Thou wouldeſt Not Drive me out of Thy Doors, but Receive me into the Liſt of Thy Family; To Give me, Rather, for my Whole Subſiſtance, Nothing for Food, but my Tears, till they have waſhed me

me as Clean as Thou wouldſt have me; Even Till my Inward Soul, having Diſpell'd thoſe Thick Miſts that Cloud and overſhadow it, Begins to Refreſh, and joy, In the Complacency of thy Countenance; And Thou ſhalt Say, In thy Tenderneſs to my Soul, *I am Thy Salvation! I am Thy Strength*, Thy *Perſeverance*; Then, under that Happy State of Humiliation, and Senſe of its own Weakneſs, It ſhall Seek Thee with Greater Fervency; And Thou ſhalt be Glorified by the Return of A Prodigal Son; By the Cure of A Sinner, Willfully Blind, In Tranſgreſſion; And by the Change of An Infidel Profligate to his God.

Wretched as I am, I Throw my Self at thy Feet! Adoring This Thy Heavenly Majeſty hidden Under the Vail of thine Infancy! Among Thoſe Royal Sages I Devote, and for ever Conſecrate My Self to thy Service: And I Conjure Thee, My Dear Lord! To Receive me with Them! I am, 'tis true, but poor; And have No Incenſe, Nor Gold, Nor Myrrhe to Offer Thee; To Recognize thy GOD-HEAD; And Acknowlege That Thou art KING, *In the Human Nature*; But I Offer All that Thou haſt Given me; All that Thou art! I Offer Thee A Contrite Heart; A Sorrow for my Sins, that Lies Deep within me: And The Sincere Deſire I have never to Offend Thee more! I Offer up to Thee A Confeſſion, from my Soul, and from my Lips, of All the Miſeries that have befallen me, for having Abandon'd Thee my God! I Sacrifice, to Thee, A Reſolution to Attone Thy Juſtice; Or Rather, Bleſſed Lord! Do Thou Thy Self take All the Satisfaction from me Thou Pleaſeſt, to the End that It may be VII.

the More Acceptable unto Thee; I Devote to Thee the Three Faculties of My Soul; My Underſtanding, that Thou Mayſt Enlighten it with the Brightneſs of Thine Eternal Truth; My Memory that it may Receive no Impreſſion But of Thee; And that Thou mayſt Raze out Every Idea there that is diſpleaſing to Thee! My Will, to be Refined, and Purified by the Fire of Thy Love; that it may be Attached to Thee with All its Strength: I Offer up to Thee, My God! Thoſe Three Divine Graces, Thou haſt Confer'd upon me In my Baptiſm: That Faith by which I Believe and Truſt In Thee; And Acknowlege Thee for my Lord, my Creator, My Redeemer, My God and My ALL; That Hope, by which My Heart is Affected, and Diſpos'd towards Thoſe Bleſſings which I may Expect from Thee; And That Charity which Warms My Soul, and makes me, Perpetually, to Breath, and Sigh after The Enjoyment of Thee! I Offer up to Thee, Moſt Divine Jeſus, All That Thou wouldſt Be, for Love of my Soul; I Offer up to Thee Thine Own Moſt Holy, Sacramental Body; Thine Own moſt Pure and Undefiled Soul; Thy Divine, Nature, which is The Fountain and Original of All Goodneſs, and All Wiſdom; I, thro' Thee, Offer up my Self to Thy Father; And to Thy Self by Him; By Thy Father and Thy Self, to The Holy Ghoſt, who is the *Mutual* ENERGY and Love Both of the *One* and of *The Other*.

But, O Bleſſed Lord! As Thou didſt Accept the Sages Offerings, their Perfumes and Incenſe with their Hearts; Since Thou didſt Enlighten them with the Juſt Idea's and Knowlege

lege of thy Majeſty, and didſt Prevent their Return to Herod, that Crafty Enemy of thine; Lighten my Darkneſs alſo, O Divine Light! Conduct and Guide me, O Thou Perfect Truth Raiſe me from my Dead Sleep, Thou Life Uncreate! Take from me Every Evil; All that is Diſpleaſing to Thee; But O, Do not Drive me Away; Do not Baniſh me thy Preſence! But Let me Dwell, for Ever, at thy Feet! It is *There*, moſt Bleſſed Redeemer! I find my Felicity, my Joy, My Delights; And that I Taſt that * *Peace of God which Paſſes All Underſtanding.* * Phil. 4: 7:

O Sacred Virgin-Mother! Who Draweſt from the Very Fountain, Thoſe Infinite and Ineſtimable Treaſures Thou art Repleniſh'd With; Vouchſafe Some Small Pittance to This Miſerable Mortal! I ask Thee not for Gold, or Frankincenſe, or Myrrhe, Such as Thoſe Royal Sages Offer'd to Thy Son; But thoſe Sublime, Celeſtial Treaſures Thou Diſpenſeſt! Might I Therefore Obtain, by You, Somthing Fitt to be Preſented to Him; And which would Procure his Love! And, O Ye Heavenly Quire! Who Environ; Who Never Ceaſe to Adore This ETERNAL KING; And who are, for Ever, Acceptable to his Majeſty; What Can You Ask of Him which He Will not Grant! Since you know, Well, what it is He Will Beſtow upon Theſe Poor Exile Souls! Do So Much for me, as Prevaile with Him for Somthing In my Behalf that may Conduce to Bring me Unto My God! That I may, One Day, Come to the *Fruition* of His Preſence In Your Bleſſed Communion, *Amen.*

ON THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

I. IT was Our Bleſſed Saviour's Pleaſure, that his Moſt Holy Mother, Forty Days after Child-bed, ſhould fulfil two Laws, In which She had No Concern: The firſt was, not to Enter Into the Temple, 'Till the full Time was Expired, during which a Woman, Deliver'd of a Male Child, was Reckon'd *Unclean*; And, if She were Rich, to Offer A Lamb, and A Turtle Dove for Her *Purification*, or elſe Two Turtles, if Her Circumſtances could Afford no better.

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The Law of *Moſes*, which, In Expreſs Terms, Specified the whole Female Sex In General, upon this Occaſion, had no Relation to the Bleſſed Virgin, who had Conceived by The Holy Ghost: But, after She had ſeen, with Her Own Eyes, the Almighty Majeſty of Heaven, Humbling Himſelf ſo Low, as to take Upon Him *The Form of A Sinner*; She rather Choſe to Imitate Her Son, and Her God, In the Example of His Debaſement, than to Preſerve the Reputation of Her Virginity before Men; for that She valu'd the Character of a Servant and Follower of Jeſus Chriſt, a Great deal more than That of being His Mother.

The other Law Ordain'd that Every *First-Born Son* ſhould be *Offered up to God*; And Conſecrated, to His Service, upon the fourtieth Day from His Nativity; That, In Caſe He were of the Tribe of *Levi*, which was *Sacerdotal*, He ſhould be oblig'd to Serve The Temple, All his Life-Time; And that if he were of Another Tribe, his Parents ſhould Releaſe him from his Obligation by laying Down a Certain Sum of Money for his *Redemption*: But the Bleſſed Jeſus was not ſubject to this Law; Becauſe Born of a Virgin, And the Words of the Law clearly Mention'd a Common and Ordinary Birth.

Their Offering was what the Poor Uſually Brought: For, tho' Thoſe Eaſtern Princes had left the Bleſſed Virgin, Gold, and Frankincenſe, and Myrrhe; Either She gave it All away to the Poor, That She might Undergo the Voluntary Poverty which The Bleſſed Jeſus Came to Practiſe, and Preach to the World; II.

Or, If She Reſerv'd any Part of it, with which She might have Purchas'd A Lamb, In order to fulfill the utmoſt Extent and Letter of The Law, yet She Bought None, Becauſe She Offer'd The Lamb Of God (which was her Only Treaſure) for the Sins of the World; And, for her Self, *Two Turtle Doves* or Two Pigeons: She gave, Afterwards, (to have that Immaculate Lamb again out of the Prieſt's Hands) the Purchaſe that was *Appointed*, for the Poor, by the Law; And Thus She *Redeemed The Redeemer of the World!* Let us not forget, Here, A Sacred Striſe of *Humility* and *Poverty* Between the *Son* and the *Mother*, In which they Both Endeavour'd to Conceal Themſelves, and Would paſs for what They were Not: We Ought to ſet this Exemplary Inſtance, of their *Pious Emulation*, as A Pattern for our Imitation, and Subject for our Gratitude, ſince it proceeds from the ſame Source of Love that All the Sufferings of the Bleſſed Jeſus, which he has undergone for Our Sakes, have taken their Riſe and Foundation.

III. It's very Probable that *Simeon* was not One of *The Prieſts of the Lord*, Since the Goſpel only ſtiles Him, * *A Juſt Man, One that feared God, and Waited for The Conſolation of* Iſrael!: But he was well ſtricken In Years, Weary of his Life, And had no Comfort In it, only that He was well Aſſured, that before Death ſhould Cloſe his Eyes, God, The Comforter, would Give Him a Sight of This God-Man, This Messias, And Saviour Of The World: To which Purpoſe He Came Into the Temple to wait there the Coming of The Mother of God, The very Day She was to be There:

* *St.* Luke 2. 25.

He

He Expected Her Every Moment, having His Eyes fixt upon the Gate, to take Notice of Every Person that Came in, without any Impression from the Holy Ghost: But, so soon as ever *Mary* and *Joseph* Entred with the Holy Infant, without the least Pomp, or any other Appearance, but that of Poverty, and Plainness; He Receiv'd the Inward Impulse, and had Notice of it; And, what was Invisible to All Eyes, Could not be Hid from the Zeal that flamed in the Heart of this Reverend Old Man: The very Moment He Laid his Eyes upon the Divine Babe, He knew Him, and Reviv'd, Like the *Phœnix*, by the Influence of this Refreshing Sun; He prepar'd Himself to Lay aside this Mortal Cloathing; And Taking the *Divine Treasure* In his Arms, whom he had encircled already In His Heart; After the manner of the Swan, He began his own Elegy, and in Dying Song to tell, that the End of His Exile was at Hand; Content to die, since He had seen, with his Eyes, the LIGHT and SALVATION *of The World*, After which He had sighed so Long,

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon The Preſentation of The Bleſſed Jeſus in the Temple.

I. O Amazing Mirrour of Eternal Truth! And Divine Bounty! O Thou Son of the Living God! Moſt Glorious *Jeſus*, My *King*, and My *God!* Open Thou Mine Eyes, that, With Good Old *Simeon*, I may Look after Thee! That I may Behold Thee! Meet Thee, and Embrace Thee; And that, like Him, I may Reſt In Thee! Since Thou Loveſt Humil y to ſuch Degree, Humble Thou my Pride.

Tear Out of my Heart the Love of Riches, ſince Thou haſt Preferred Poverty; And ſince it was Thy Pleaſure to Subject Thy Self to *Moſes*'s Law; Grant that I may, for Ever, ſubmit my ſelf entirely unto Thee! Thou knoweſt my Frailty, and the Lukewarmneſs of my Soul; And from hence 'tis that Thou Requireſt So Little of me! But, This Love will not Allow Thee to ſpare *Thy Self* after this manner; *That*, Will not Diſpenſe with Thee, In any Thing; No, Not Even with that which ſeems moſt Contrarious and Oppoſite to Thine Infinite Majeſty! Teach Me, Moſt Divine Maſter, This Law of Love! For Love will not yield out of Any Fear or Difficulties;

ſcalties; And when it is Pure and Real, It finds Thee, my God, So Glorious, and So Worthy to be Served, that Its Utmoſt Wiſhes are, to be Wholly Spent and Conſumed In thy Service; Every Law is Pleaſant and Eaſy to Love; And Every Burden Light; And it will Eſteem itſelf Happy, if it Can find ways to Sacrifice All that the World Calls *Great*, to Thy Greatneſs.

But, Lord, when will the Time Come, In which Thy Love will make me Humble, Eaſy, Poor, and Diſengaged! When ſhall I Begin to Love Contempt; To Reliſh my Abject State, And to Hate my Self; And when, ſhall I, Being Crucified Both In Body and Soul, be Wholly and Entirely Thine! Thy Ever Bleſſed Mother, is Infinitely Rich In thy Sole Poſſeſſion; St. *Joſeph*, thy Reputed Father, Content, and Enjoying All, In thy Service; Sits Eaſy In his Poor Condition; *Simeon*, that Good Old Man, Breaths after Thee Only; And, I, My Lord! Who do Believe All This, Upon the Sanction of Thy Word, And, my Self, Feel the Strength and Infallibility Thereof; Still depart, and Separate my Self from Thee!

II. But How ſhall I be Senſable of my Wandering and Stray-Condition, O Divine Brightneſs! Unleſs Thou ſhalt pleaſe to Beam thy Light Into me! If it be thy Will, that Infants, In their Un-thinking State, and before they Come to the Uſe of Common Reaſon, ſhall be Devoted Into Thy Fold; That, when they Come to Underſtand Themſelves, They may be Senſible They are already Thine; How Can I Conſent, that Thou, My God, ſhouldſt Suffer a Wretched Creature, On whom Thou haſt

haſt Beſtow'd The Faculties of Reaſon, To Diſtinguiſh Thy Glories, not to be Thus A But, Inſtead of That, to Contradict thy Precepts and Diſobey thy Will! Of thine Infinite Mercies, O Lord, Rectifie Theſe Exceſſes in me! It is The Bent of thy Love to me, That Thou mayſt Heal me! O Let me Hate my Self, that I may be Cur'd! Lord! Give me a Senſe, that I may Bewayle the Loſs, of my Infant Years, In which I was not Capable of Either Knowing or Loving Thee! For, tho' I was not, *Then*, In a Condition to Offend Thee, It is Still True that Thou Lovedſt, me and that I did not Anſwer, I made no Return, Unto it! But, more than that I muſt Lament the *Firſt Fruits*, the Morning of my Rational Life, when my Will was Ripe, That I devoted None of Thoſe Early Moments unto Thee! That I, *Then*, Neglected my Duty; That I Threw, out of my Mind, thy Continual Bleſſings, and thy Very Self; Theſe, I muſt needs Deplore, with the Sins that I have Committed, and the Exorbitant Dictates of Senſual Appetite that I have Purſu'd and Gratified, from the Time that I Knew what it was to Tranſgreſs, to this Very Moment; for which, I do Confeſs, In thy Preſence, My Confuſion and my Miſery! But what will be the Fruits of This, O Bleſſed Saviour, and How ſhall I Come off, if I ſhould Recount the Follies of my Life Unto thee! If I Reckon up the Dayes, the Months, the Years which I have Squandered away In Sin; And How I have Lived without Thee, Thou Very Life of my Soul!

It is Here that I muſt Lift up my Voice, In Strongeſt Complaints, that Thou Mayeſt Hear me!

me! That I muſt Crie Aloud 'Till Thou ſhalt Give me a Reply! And not Ceaſe to Mourn, and Pour forth My Tears, untill Thou haſt forgiven me! I will Purſue, I will follow Thee, wherever Thou ſhalt Go, my Deareſt Saviour! I will keep Cloſe unto Thee; I will Sacrifice my Self with Thee, In Oblation to Thine Eternal Father, that I may Hide my Self from his Juſtice Under The ſhadow of thy Wings! The Lambs that Are Offer'd for Sacrifice Return No More to Thoſe who Hallowed the Victim; They were Given up for Ever. But I will not Act after that Manner; I will Offer up Thee, Thou Lamb of God! In My Behalf; But Either I'll be Sacraficed with Thee, or Elce I'll Bring Thee Back again with me; For I Can Neither, In Death, Nor Life, be Separated from Thee!

III. * *O Father of Mercies and God of all Comfort!* I Offer up to Thee thine Only Son; Caſt Thine Eyes Upon Him, that Thou Mayſt Pardon Me, and thro' Him Receive Me Into thy Favour! Behold This Divine Infant! This Meek, and Humble Lamb who, for The Love of Me, has Made Himſelf the Sacrifice to Attone thy Wrath! He is not Yet Come to Speak, Moſt Mighty Lord! But His Throbbing Heart is Pleading for me! He Voluntarily Gives and Preſents Himſelf Unto Thee, to Become the Victim for a World of Sinners! And No Soul is Excluded from the Purgation and Merits of his Sacrifice! He Fulfils the Law, and Pays Thee Homage for us All! Thou, O God, Seeſt the Fire He Burns with; The Pardon that He Craves for Mankind; And the Graces that He Merits for us! And, along with

* 2 Cor. 1. 3.

with Him, I devote to Thee my whole Self, and All I have; My Poverty, my Miseries, My Desires, My Life, with all that Belongs unto it, of Misery or Pleasure; My Body with All its Appetites and Senses; My Soul with All its Faculties and Powers; And All that Can be found In me of Good or Evil; The *Good*; That it May Improve and Grow by thy Grace; And The *Evil*, that it may be Rooted Out and Destroyed by thy Mercy.

Thy Well Beloved Son would Begin his Life with a Most Solemn Declaration of his Obedience; And Undertake Nothing, 'Till after He had Received the Instances of thy Paternal Benediction: Lord, Give me Leave to Implore this Mercy of Thee; And, Unworthy as I am, to Obtain it; And Let me, from this Moment, Devote and Consecrate My Self to thy Service, So Long as I have a Being! Grant me An Illaps of that Most Holy Spirit who Revealed to The Holy Virgin the Counsels of Thy Wisdom; who Conducted Blessed *Simeon* Into The Temple; And Inform'd Him In The Knowlege of his Saviour * *Create In me A New Heart, and Renew A Right Spirit within me,* that May Lead me to thy Self! I am Sensible how Little I deserve This Favour; But In Order to Obtain it, I Offer up the *Infinite Merits* of that *Immaculate Lamb!* For his Sake Receive me, O Lord, Into the Number of Thy Servants; Let Thy Love to Him Move Thee to Compassion me! And O Let me Never Cease, but Persevere, for Ever, to the Last Gasp of Life, In Thy Service.

* Ps. 51. 10.

Is it Possible, My God! That Thou shouldst Conceal Thy Self, In the Midst of Such a City as *Jerusalem*, In the Temple? Why did not Every Creature Recognize thy Majesty; And Usher Thee, In, with all the Marks and Instances of Joy that they Could possibly Express! The Sea and The *Jordan* Fled Before *Israel* when Thou didst Determin Them from *Egypt*, The Mountains and The Hills Leap'd for Joy, and The Rocks Chang'd Into *Fountains* of *Living Waters*, Because They found Thee, their God, In the Midst of thy People! The most Insensible Beings were Affected when The *Ark of the Covenant* was Carried on; And Yet All These Miracles were Nothing but The Figure of *That* whose Substance is Included and is *Accomplished* In Thee. Yet, This Very Day, Thou, Thy Self, Passest Thro' the Congregation; And There's None that Know Thee Except, Good Old *Simeon* and *Anna* the Prophetess! Immortal Thanks, and Praise be Given Unto Thee my God! For The Peculiar Blessings and Advantages Thou dost Confer upon The Humble Soul, Even Unto Those that Love Thy Name! When Thou art Discoursing In The Temple Amidst The Jewish Rabbi's; When Thou art Working Miracles In Sight of All *Judea*, They are not Sensible who Thou Art; And Here, Infant as Thou Art, and Poor and Speechless, without Any Ceremony or Appearance, In the Arms of Thy Mother; Thou Canst not hide Thy Self from Those who Love Thee! Nothing Could Make the Sufferings of this Exile State Tolerable, but the Expectation of Seeing Thee; And Life it Self would be a Burthen, Insupportable, but for the Hopes IV.

of

of Finiſhing its Courſe, With Embracing, and Reſting, In Thee!

V. O my Salvation and my Treaſure! Thou Life by which I Live! And without which I die! Why doſt Thou Suffer A Heart, that Loves Thee ſo, to Languiſh! Where art Thou! my Supreme Good! O Thou Everlaſting Repoſe of my Soul! Thou will not Suffer Any Mortal to Behold Thee without Dying! Well; Be it So. Then, Lord! Let me Die, ſo I See But Thee! Why doſt Thou Hide the Beauty of Thy Face from me! O Let My Soul Partake of This *Beatifick Viſion*, that All my Inward Faculties, Charm'd with Thy Attractive Glories, May Loath Every Thing that has not Something, of Thee, In it; And That My Heart may never ceaſe to Pant, and to Breath after Thee, My God! How Happy am I when Theſe Impulſes are Upon me! When I Aſpire and Soar ſo High, In my Deſires, and In my Love! How Happy, when I am Doing That which Pleaſes Thee; when the Strength of my Paſſion towards Thee, makes every Thing elſe Inſipid and Taſteleſs to me! For then It is that I know Thee, In Every Shape, Under Every Figure, and Condition Thou Appeareſt in.

Even thro' Thy Infant-State, I Behold Thy Majeſty; Under the moſt preſſing Circumſtances of Thy poor Condition, I Admire The Treaſures of Thy Worth; And, even when I See Thy Precious Body Extended upon the Croſs, I am Charm'd with Thy Beauty; But, Alas! When My Heart is Eſtranged from Thy Love, I Remember Thee No Longer, not even In the *Miracles* Thou workeſt; Nor In the Bright-

Brightneſs of Thy Majeſty: O my God! Unite me, therefore, and Incorporate me into Thy Self; *Take Thou off Mine Eyes, leſt They ſhould Behold Vanity*; And Vouchſafe to Grant that they may be Only and Intirely fixt on Thee, and in Contemplation of Thine Eternal Truth! O Give This Miſerable, Wretched Heart to know that Thou art its Salvation, And the Centre of its Reſt; Grant that I may find No Pleaſure but in Thee Only, who art, in Truth, my Real Friend, And All the Glory and Treaſure of my Soul.

Take away from me The Guſt of Every Senſual Delight; Make me know my Self, that I may not give A Looſe, nor ſuffer my ſelf to be Led away by the Deceitful Pleaſures of This World, And Thoſe Temptations, which will bring me into Ruin: But let every Faculty within me Breath after Thee! Haſten, Bleſſed Lord! And, Do not Defer Thy Coming! For All That My Soul can Wiſh for, will Attend Thy Approaches! Come, then, O ſweet Jeſus! Enter into this Sin-Sick Soul; Break off theſe Slaviſh Chains, with which 'tis Fetter'd and Bound down in Sin; Vouchſafe, Unto it, the Perfect Freedom, which Thy Children Enjoy; So that Nothing may Tear it from Thee; And that it may Enjoy *All in All*, In Thee! That it may follow Thee; That it may Embrace Thee; That it may Poſſeſs Thee! And that in the Plenary and Full Enjoyment of Thee, it may, Chant out its own Dying Elegy, Like This Ancient Holy Father, in His Canticle of Joy.

AN EXPLICATION

Of The Song of SIMEON.

1. V. St. Luc. 2.29. *Lord! Now Letteſt Thou Thy Servant Depart In Peace According to Thy Word.*

I Am Enamour'd of Thee, My Deareſt Lord! And yet am forc'd to Live far from Thee! My Life is ſpent with Anguiſh, and I live in a Continual Courſe of *Pain* and *Sorrow*, Becauſe Thou art hid from Mine Eyes! And the Ardency of My Soul, and my Longing after Thee make All the Pleaſures of the World Taſtleſs and inſipid to Me. Theſe are Falſe Appearances, which have no Solid Foundation, In Them, and in a Moment fade and vaniſh; And, yet I Grieve they hold ſo Long, Becauſe They keep me ſuch a While from Thee, My God, and My Supreme Good! The Body indulges in Eaſe, and the Senſes Swim in Pleaſures; And, when They have Glutted, in Licentiouſneſs, they ſtill tell me, that they are not ſatisfied; There is Something more They want, Something that They crave ſtill! But my Soul whoſe

whoſe Large Deſires Thou, Alone, Canſt Supply, O my God! And to whom All the whole World, Beſides, is Nothing; *That*, Never Ceaſes, with heavy Groans to Pant after Thee; And its Sadneſs Will Never have An End, 'Till thou thy Self ſhalt Deign to Vouchſafe me the Comforts of thy Preſence, who art my Only, and moſt Deſirable Refreſhment.

Deliver me, O Lord, out of this dark Priſon, This Dungeon of Clay! — Behold the happy Moment! See, here, How the Bleſſed Hour is Come, that I have thought So Long for! Let me for Ever Now Adore thy Goodneſs, my Moſt Gracious Redeemer and my Felicity! Let me Worſhip Thee, Thou Life of my Soul! Thou haſt, at Laſt, heard the Voice of Him that Loveth Thee; And Since I have found my Peace, and the Object of my Eternal Reſt, why Should I Live any Longer, to hazard the Loſs of it again! No! My Bleſſed Lord! I will Live No Longer Now! I Renounce the World, Since I am Got Into the Poſſeſſion of The *Treaſures of Heaven*; It is Time my Fetters were Knock'd Off, and that I were Let out, In Peace from the Priſon of This Body.

V. 2. *For mine Eyes Have Seen Thy* SALVATION.

MY Soul, Enlighten'd by These Beams of thy Divine Glory; Fortified by Thy Strength; Affected with the Love of its Redeemer, has Nothing more to Ask, than to be Delighted with the Brightness of Thine Image; To be Immoveable In my Devotions to Thee; And to Enjoy Thee out of This Prison, of my *Flesh*, without fear of Losing Thee; For, Altho', my Soul being at Such a Distance from Thee, and Enclosed In this Vehicle of Earth, is Deprived of thy Vision; It is Sensible, for all that, that, Thou, Alone art its Salvation; And, therefore, Ravish'd with thine Eternal Graces, It has a Disgust for All Things Else; Its Whole Aim and desire is to Behold Him, who heals it of all its Sores; Who, Only, Can Give it the full of its wishes; Who Rifles it, who Enflames it! And Thou art Come Into The World upon No other Account, but to Kindle The Celestial Fire of thy Love within us.

Which Thou haſt Prepared before the Face of All People. V. 3.

THE Eternal Father has Given Thee to The World; That Both The Righteous, and the Sinner, Both Jew and Gentile, and All Mankind, Without Diſtinction, May Behold Thee as their Pattern, their King, their Light to Guide them, Their Glorie, Their Treaſure, And their Happineſs; And Becauſe Human Nature was not Capable to Comprehend Thy Brightneſs, Thou haſt Cloathed Thy Self with Our Fleſh, that We might Enjoy Thee In a Way Suitable to Our Weakneſs and Imperfection; And that We might Set before Our Eyes, Under Every Article of Our Life, and Conduct, Him, who is the moſt Deſirable Object of Our Love, and the Ultimate End and Scope of All Our Wiſhes and Deſires.

A Light to Lighten The Gentiles, and The Glory of thy People Iſrael. V. 4.

THE Thickeſt Clouds and Darkneſs Flee away at Thy Preſence, O Lord! All Our Errors are Set Naked and Expos'd In thy Sun; And, By the Help of Thy Light, We

Behold Thoſe Heavenly Charms with which Our Souls are Inchanted: The Jewiſh Church found All their Types and Mighty Promiſes Accompliſhed In Thee, And All The Glorious Characteriſticks which Diſtinguiſh'd Them to be the Favourites of God, Perfected, In Thy Advent: The Univerſe of Souls, The Whole Rational Creation, of this Sublunary World, Are Become, Like the Stars of Heaven, Brillant, Emboſs'd, Perfect, in thy Image; and Repleniſh'd with thy Beatifick Nature, from the Reflextion of thy Brightneſs; Enlighten me, O my Glory! Heal me, Thou God of my Salvation! Exalt me, Thou Tranſcendent Excellency and Sublime Brightneſs! Fill me with Thy Un-utterable Joy, Thou God of my Supreme Felicity! O Give me the Strength of Faith to Look upon Thee! The Aſſurance of Expectation, to Wait thy Promiſes! And The Fire of Love that I may Graſp Thee, and that My Soul may Enjoy as Much of Thee as it is Capable, In this Groveling State, 'Till Its Change ſhall Come, when it ſhall Behold Thee, as Thou art, In an Inſeparable Union, and the Eternal Reſt of The Heavenly *Jeruſalem*.

☞ O Bleſſed Mother of Him who is The Reſurrection and The Life of the World! By the Same Ardour with which Thou didſt Offer up thy Bleſſed Infant In the Temple to the Eternal Father, for the whole Race of Mankind, and by which Thou Thy Self Art Conſecrated to his Service; Make an Oblation, Alſo, of my Soul, to The Divine Majeſty, that I may for Ever Live In His Manſion; That I may Never Depart, nor be a Stranger to His Holy Will! And that During the Baniſhment of my Soul from God, In this Exile

Exile World, I may Never Extinguiſh The Flame of my Love to Him.

O Ye Ever Bleſſed Spirits who Already Are Received Into *Thoſe Everlaſting Habitations*; And Behold The *Beatifick Viſion*, and See HIM (whom, like us, you Once Breathed after) *Clearly*, and *as He is*; And Enjoy Him with this Security that You ſhall Never Loſe him More; Grant me ſome ſmall Share of The *True Riches* you Poſſeſs! Draw thither my Leaden Heart where Mine and Your Treaſure is! That The Clouds and Night of This Miſerable Life, being Diſpell'd and Fled, I may Advance Into *That vaſt Eternal Day*; And *There*, with you, Sing for Ever the Triumphant Hoſannah's and Hallelujah's of Praiſe, to This *Merciful God*, whoſe Viſion is The Perfection and Conſummation of Your Felicity, *Amen*.

A

Divine Contemplation,

Upon The Eſcape of The Bleſſed Jeſus Into Egypt.

WHOM, Doſt Thou Fly From, Bleſſed Lord! Thou who art Lord of the World, and *Son* of *The Living God!* Whither doſt Thou flee, for Safety, Thou, who art the *Univerſal Refuge of Souls!* And In whom The Guilty find A Sanctuary, Secure againſt the Puniſhments They are Threatned with! Mortality and Death flies from Thee; They Cannot Abide Thy Preſence, Becauſe Thou Art The Everlaſting Life, which his fatal Arrows Cannot Reach! The Grim Tyrant Eſchews I.

Thee, For Thou art The Righteous Judge, who art to Condemn him; Sin and Malice hide their Heads, from Thy Glory, which They Cannot Behold, without Confuſion; Ignorance and Blindneſs, and The Black Deſigns of Thy Foes, Cannot Stay where Thou art; For They Breed The Deeds of Darkneſs, which the Splendor of Thy Brightneſs would Abaſh and Conſume! Affliction and Miſery Cannot have Place with Thee, For Thou art The Comfort of The Diſtreſſed, And The Strength of the Feeble Heart: If, Therefore, Thou muſt Needs take Thy Flight; Come, Thou God of My Soul! And Make me thy Cave, and thy Retreat; Let the moſt Deep, and Inward Receſs, of my Heart, Become thy Hiding Place; And, *There*, ſhalt Thou be Saſe from Thoſe who Seek thy Life to Deſtroy it! None will Ever Imagin, that Do But Behold the Filthineſs of my Sinful Soul, that Thou wouldſt take Sanctuary, or ſhelter Thee, from Harm, Under So Polluted A Roof; And So, I ſhall Enjoy Thee, without Fear; Thou Wilt forgive me my Sins; Thou'lt Regenerate and Make me a New Creature, by Thy Preſence, and Enrich me with Thy Love, and All *Spiritual Bleſſings*.

II. How Deplorable were my Condition, ſhould The Number of my Sins, Remove Thee So far from me, that Thou wouldſt Rather Chooſe to Fly Into *Egypt*, than to Remain In my Heart! Deareſt Lord! I See Plainly that Thou wilt firſt obtain mercy for me by thy Sufferings; And Undergo the Inconveniencies of An Exile, to Cure my Maladies; But, at leaſt, My God! Carry me along with Thee! That I may be the Companion of thine Exile; And that

that I may Draw, from The *Fountain-Head*, the Truth Thou Teacheſt me: Thou art The Lord of The World; And Yet thou Liveſt, In it, like a Stranger! Thou Wilt have No Fixt Habitation In Thine Own Demeſns; And Thou Avoideſt A Settlement In the World, Altho' Thou haſt Created it, and It is the Work of Thine Own Hands.

Art Thou Baniſht then, my God, Like me, from The Abodes of Happineſs! If thy Soul be Happy, and Enjoy's The *Beatifick Viſion of God*, what Can it fear here Below! And why doſt Thou Treat it as A Stranger! It Belongs Only Unto me, My God! who am Baniſhed from Heaven, to become A *Sojourner* and *Pilgrim upon Earth!* I Ought not to Settle Any where, Becauſe Thou haſt no Place of Abode for me to find Thee, here, In; And, 'tis but Juſt that I ſhould Live without any Tye to the Enjoyments of this World, That I may not Forfeit thoſe Rewards Thou doſt Promiſe In the Other: But as for Thee, O Lord, who Sanctifieſt All Things by thy Preſence, Thou haſt Nothing to fear, Becauſe Nothing Can hurt Thee! Thou Canſt not Fly, from Thy Self; Nor be A Stranger, In Any Place; Becauſe thou art Omnipreſent, and There's No Secret Receſs that has not Thee, In it! And, tho' Thou doſt not Stay, nor Confine Thy Self to thy Native Stable, from Thine Infancy, Thou doſt Undertake a Painful Journey; And wilt have Nothing to Do with the World, any More than as A Paſſenger that's Making for A *Better Place.*

III. Open thine Eye of Mercy, O my God! And The Treaſures of Thy Patience, to Support Me, and to forgive Me, the Errors and Irregularities of My Life Paſt! For, tho' I have Experienc'd the Uncertainty and Inconſtancy of it, Yet I Rivet my Self So to it, as if it were to Laſt for Ever.

I am Senſible, that I ſhall Never find any Solid Comfort but in Thee; And that, as Thou haſt Given me my Being that I Might Enjoy Thee, I Ought not to Expect any Real Happineſs, out of Thee: I See Continually, before my Eyes the Revolutions, and Changes of this World, That All things, here, are under a Perpetual Viciſſitude and Alteration; Sometimes a Top, and ſometimes Underneath; As if they were Whirld About by the Quick Rotation of a Wheel; And Nothing is More True, Nothing More Evident Than This Obſervation.

By the Courſe of thy Life I See, Thou Saviour of My Soul! That Thou haſt No Reſting Place, In This World! And Learn, by thy Example, that Thou wouldſt not have Me Fix My Heart upon Any of thoſe Temporal Goods, thy Providence has Indulg'd me with; And which, Holy and Divine as they may be, I Ought not to Pay Any Other Regard to, than as They may Conduce to Bring me to thoſe Eternal Rewards thou haſt Prepared for Me: After All theſe Inſtructions, All Theſe Proofs, And All Theſe *Lights*, my Heart is, Still, Infatuated In Blindneſs, and Inſenſibility of Heaven; Diſtracted with a Thouſand Different Objects; Incumbred with An Infinite Multiplicity of Uſeleſs or Sinful Cares; And, As Much Glu'd and Fixt to the World, as if This were

were the Place of its Repoſe and Everlaſting Reſt; O How Blind, Unreaſonable, and Senſeleſs am I Grown! I See the Truth and Certainty of Theſe Things, and Yet I Behave my Self as if I Saw them Not! But who Interpoſes to prevent the Images of this Sight? And if I Do See my Miſery, Why am I So Infatuated? Unhappy Depravation! That Engages My Affections So, to theſe Fleeting Pleaſures, that Rivets My Soul to Such Tranſient Enjoyments, And Involves me In thoſe Tides of Vain Delights, that Glide Away, Every Moment, before Mine Eyes! Thou Seeſt, O Fountain of Goodneſs! The Wretchedneſs of this Heart of Mine; Attach'd to Itſelf; Full of Contradictions, and Juſtly Rent and Mangled, by a Multiplicity of Contrariety's and Miſtakes, Becauſe it Separates itſelf from the Unity of Thine Eternal Truth!

My Miſerable Soul, Plac'd Between thoſe Immutable Treaſures, which It Believes, Hopes, and Deſires; And the Periſhable Enjoyments of this World, which it purſues with So much Eagerneſs and Paſſion, Finds the Time, which it takes up, too Long; And the pains too Great to Purchaſe An Happineſs which ſhall Never have an End: Its Attempts are Cold, and Its Deſires Languid; But to Taſt Senſual and Corruptible Pleaſures, It Complains of No Care, Nor Application! Here, Life Seems Very Short, And Eternity itſelf would not be Tedious, or too Long; What Wretched Sins Proceed from Hence! What Deadly Fruits does not This Empoiſon'd Root, Produce! How Can A True Chriſtian Faith and Hope Conſiſt with Such Baſe Inclinations, And Such Monſtrous IV.

Monſtrous Exceſſes! Thou, O Lord! Who Knoweſt, and Pondereſt theſe Truths, In a Juſt Ballance, Thou Seeſt what Great Reaſon I have to Suſpect my Own Faith, my Hope, my Religion, Since my Works Are So Oppoſite and Contrary to my Profeſſion.

But whilſt Thou Beholdeſt this Wretched Heart, Caſt thine Eyes upon thy Own, that Thou Mayſt find Something There to Cure Mine! Conſider, O Divine Saviour! upon what Account it is, that Thou haſt Undertaken This Earthly Pilgrimage! Remember for whom thou Art taking So much Pains! If My Sins Cry aloud to Thee for Juſtice, The Wounds of this Miſerable Soul, which Thou haſt Redeemed, are So Many Mouths, which Shriek Yet Louder to Implore thy Mercy! To what Purpoſe haſt Thou Deigned to Come Down, from Thy Glorious Habitation, to Dwell with me In this Exile-World; Unleſs I Might hope to find In Thy Paternal Bowels, the Remedy to my Miſery's! The Stains of my Soul, Can not be So Deep, But Thy *Mercy* is, Yet More Powerful, to take Out the Crimſon! And Thou wilt, Alway's, have more Goodneſs to forgive, than my Corrupted Heart has of *Wickedneſs* or *Malice* to Offend; And, Thou art more Eager to Expreſs thy Mercy, than I Can be to Obtain it! Open, then, O my God! the Bowels of thy Love, to thy poor and Miſerable Creature! Vouchſafe, to this Unhappy Exile, An Ardent and Inceſſant Longing to Behold thy Glory and to Enjoy Thee! And, In Thine Omnipotence, Enter Into this Heart of mine! Drive Out All its Enemies, Before Thee! Fix and Eſtabliſh Thy Love There!

There! Plant, In it, This *Tree of Life*; Pluck from the Very Root, All Terrene and Worldly Affections, that they may Never More Spring up within me.

All my Miſeries Call Thee Unto This, O Divine Mercy! Theſe are What Lift up their Crie unto Thee for Relief! All the Powers of my Soul Bear Towards Thee, O Thou Immenſity of Riches, that Thou wouldſt Vouchſafe to Supply Them; All The Stains and Blemiſhes of my Beſpotted Soul Preſent themſelves Before Thee, O Thou Infinite Purity, That Thou wouldſt Race 'em out and Make me White as Snow! And Since Thou Keepeſt me here, In this Baniſhment, Amidſt Earthly Things, Give me, O Lord, a True ſenſe of the Baſeneſs of them, that I may See and take Notice how Empty and what Nothings They Are, that I may take off my Heart from Them; That it may not Love, or fix it ſelf on any thing But its God!

V. O how is it poſſible, Moſt Dear God, that My Hopes, In Thee, ſhould Faile, Since I cannot but Obſerve with what Tenderneſs Thou Expreſſeſt Thy Love to poor Sinners! And How, In thy Mercy, Thou art Come to Dwell with them In this *Valley of Tears!* Since I See, how Eager Thou art to do them Good! That the very Time They are Perſecuting Thee, upon Earth, Thou doſt not Return and Betake Thee to Heaven, where Thy Proper Manſion of Peace is; Where That Numberleſs Hoſt of Bleſſed Saints fall down and Adore Thee; Where They Love Thee! Where They Know Thee, as In Truth, Thou art, Their *All*, *Their God!* That thou Rather fleeſt Under this Ungrateful Perſecution, Into *Egypt*, than into Heaven

Heaven thy Dwelling Place; Becauſe Thy Gracious Purpoſe was, by the Influence of Thy Bleſſed Spirit, to Purify that Part of the World, that was then Defiled by Sin and Idolatry, that thereby It might Become a fit and Proper Place for the Reception of ſo many Holy Hermits who were Afterwards to follow Thee and Live there, Recluſe, In the Purity of thy Love, Becauſe of that Sweet Air, And the Perfumes which Thy Holy Spirit had Diffus'd and Shed upon the face of that, Now, Bleſſed Country: That Thou mighteſt be Known, Lov'd and Worſhip'd In that very Place, even where thy Holy Name had been Blaſphemed; Where The Devil was Ador'd; And where Wickedneſs and Guilt had ſo long Prevailed! Yes! Bleſſed God! Thou Fledſt to *Egypt*, not ſo much to Save thine own Life, as to Sanctify the Place; And to Prepare the way for thine Elect; Thou haſt Obtain'd, for Them, of thy Father, *The Eternal Spirit*, Grace and Love, and Conſtancy, So much as is Sufficient to Enable and Diſpoſe Devoted Saints, to Lead the Life of Hermits In a Deſart: Every One of thoſe was, at that Time, In thy view, Although they were not yet Born; And found, In that *Wild*, Afterwards, the Grace that Thou hadſt Purchas'd, for them by the Strength of thy Love and Interceſſions.

Thou art Entirely taken up About us and Our Neceſſities, O my God! Even when Thou Seemeſt to be moſt at Eaſe and Quiet: Thou waſt but Juſt Come Into the World, when, preſently, Thou Muſt Away, and take thy Flight Into *Egypt*; There to Undergo a Thouſand Inconveniencies and Hardſhips, And be Like a Worm Searching

Searcling for Some Little Hole to Hide itſelf, that it may not be Troden underfoot; And, whilſt thou doſt Continue there, Quiet and Unknown, Thou art, even then, Sowing the Seeds of a Holy and Recluſe Life: From whence Thoſe Bleſſed Fruits Proceed of being *Poor In Spirit*; And the Inſtructions of the Soul, how to ſhun the Pomps and Glories of This World; to Deſpiſe and Scorn its Fading Vanities; to Make No Noiſe, Nor Figure in it; to be Conſtant In Devotion; to be wholly Given up to the Duties of Religion; Purity of Heart, and Simplicity of Spirit; To Breath more and more after God, and that Glorious *Recompence of Reward!* To Reliſh the Glory of *Suffering for God and Righteouſneſs Sake!* To Lead The Life of Pure Love! And of the Innocence and Purity of Angels In a Terreſtrial and Mortal Body.

When Thou ſhalt have Sow'd This Heavenly Seed, which is to Grow up Into a Number of Thy Faithful and Elect Servants, Choſen, Before Time Began, By Thine Eternal Wiſdom, Thou wilt Return again Into *Judea*, There to fulfil and Accompliſh the *Myſterious Work of our Redemption*, And from thence Aſcend Into Heaven, Preſcribing Theſe Divine Vertues to be Revealed to the Whole World.

But whilſt Thou art at Work, In Sanctfying theſe Elect Souls, and Enflaming them with Thy Love, where am I, O Lord! and In what Condition haſt Thou Left me! Doſt Thou not Compare Thy Doctrine to A * *Net Caſt Into the Sea, and which Incloſes all Sorts of Fiſhes*: Wilt Thou ſuffer me, O Lord, to Swim out of it, Thou, who knoweſt that I'm Undone, unleſs I be Incloſed in It! O Thou Fountain of Holi-

VI.

* St. Mat. 13. 47.

neſs!

neſs! Do Thou Sanctify My Soul! Thou Source of Glory, Enlighten me with Thy Brightneſs! O Thou Inexhauſtible Spring of All Goodneſs and Perfection! Change Me! Thou Original of All Eſſence, and Thou Well of Life! Give Being and Life to This Nothing. O Thou Boundleſs Ocean of Love! Warm and Encircle this Lukewarm Heart, and let Thy Sacred Fire Conſume, within it, whatever is Diſpleaſing unto Thee! Oh! My Divine Saviour! How Weak am I! How Frail and Oppoſite to My Self! The Good I deſire I have Not, and the Evil that I Abhor is ſtill with Me! But my Inclination towards what is Good, is not Strong enough to Render my Abhorrence of Evil Effectual; And my Hatred of what is Unlawful, is not Sufficient to turn the Bias, In me, towards thoſe Vertues I do but too Superficially Admire: There is Nothing In me But Miſery, and Falſehood, and Outſide! Thou, Only, O Lord, doſt Behold what In Truth I am! Heal me, Thou Heavenly Phyſician! ſince Thou Knoweſt my Infirmity! And, O Give me a Heart that I may as much deſire to Recover, as Thou art Willing to *Save My Soul Alive!*

VII. Give me to Underſtand, O Divine Saviour, the Depth of Thy Merits! Thou flyeſt from a ſingle Enemy at this Time, that Thou mayſt hereafter, One Day, fall Into the Hands of many more, who will not ſtick to Take away Thy Life! Thou Teacheſt me to fly thoſe who perſecute me; And yet, at the ſame Time, that Thou art Expreſſing Thy Love to me, Thou Ordereſt the Matter So, that whilſt I'm Eſcaping One Affliction I meet another, more Grievous

Grievous than the first! What is Thine Intent In This, My God! Were it Not more Eligible to Undergo the Present Afflictions we meet with, than to Avoid them, that we may fall into those that are more Painful, And which One Can't Avoid! How very little Can I see into Thy Secret and Gracious Purpose, O Thou Eternal Wisdom! And How Blind am I in My own Designs, when I would avoid the Cross to find some Rest! For, Alass! where shall I go to meet with That, in this World! But wherefore then wouldst Thou have me flee away, If in my Flight, I must not expect to find Rest!

If, *In Truth*, I Loved Thee, O Lord! I should Comprehend the Secrets of Thy Conduct; It is Thy Wise Decree, that Man, A Pilgrim upon Earth, should never Cease, to be travelling on, in his Way; That He should have no Rest in any Stage of Life; That He should Sanctify His Exile-State, by these Trials of His Patience, Love, and Duty to Thee! Perhaps, also, Thou Desirest that I should not take to Heart either what I Suffer, or what Thy Providence has Determined Concerning me; And that Resigning my Self entirely to Thy Providence, I should Concern My Self no farther than to Live loose to the World, to Serve Thee with Integrity, and to Give My Self up, in All Things, to the Conduct and Guidance of Thy Holy Will and Commandments.

O Holy Lord! Who desirest to be the Ruler of My Heart, Why does it Run so Counter to Thy Holy Will! Whence is it that it does not Understand what it is that Thou designest, That

That by this Means Thou intendeſt to Redeem and Deliver it from the Slavery of thoſe Tyrant-Sins which Eſtrange it from Thee! When ſhall I be ſo Happy as to Change this Slavery into that *Perfect Freedom*, in thy Service! If Thou wert my Only Treaſure, And All the Riches of my Soul, I ſhould Live, in this my State of Baniſhment, without Any other Wiſh but that of Heaven, and that State of Glory! In the midſt of All my Friends, I ſhould Aſpire and Languiſh only after thy Friendſhip; And amongſt mine Enemies, make Thee my only Refuge and Defence! In Thy Preſence I ſhould enjoy *Perfect Freedom*, Under the moſt ſtrict Confinement, and be empriſon'd to Thy Love in the moſt Large and Unconfined State of Liberty; The Croſs would be the moſt Agreeable Condition to me, in every Part of it; Becauſe, *There*, I ſhould be Nearer fixt to Thee; And the Leſs Comfort I had in This World, the Greater Share of Thy Sweets ſhould I be Regal'd with.

Whence Comes it then, Moſt Dear Lord! that I ſhould expect, *My Home*, or ſeek for Pleaſures, In This World! Alaſs! This is not the Place, where I ought to Live under any other Expectation But the Croſs! To Bleſs Thee with All My Faculties and Powers! To Love and Wiſh for Thee with All my Strength; and to Love Thee with all my Soul! Live Thou in me, My God! Take Thy Pilgrimage Within Me! And Repoſe There! Let me be for ever, fixt to Thee! Let me be, for Ever, Thine! And Let Every Deſire of my Soul, Abſtracted from All elſe in the World, be Centred and Lodg'd for Ever in Thee!

O Moſt Holy Queen of Angels! to Whom No Miſery has been too Grievous, No State of Pilgrimage been thought too Difficult, Nor No Part, of the World A Stranger to Thee, where Thou hadſt The Bleſſing of Thy Saviour's Preſence! When Thou waſt Poſſeſt of This Sacred Treaſure, Every Country Was Thine Home, Every Fatiegue was Sweet and Eaſy; Every Act of Obedience a Light Burthen; Thou Knoweſt, O Thou Sanctuary of Sinners, that there Can be no Bleſſing for me but from Him! Remember, I Beſeech Thee, That The Fruit of His Labours is to *Adopt Many Children*; To Re-call Thoſe who have been Wandering, and are far from Him; And to Re-unite Thoſe, to Him, who are Diſperſt; Aſſiſt, O Mother of Mercy! This Wandering Sheep! Purſued by A Thouſand Enemies, *In This Valley of Tears!* Bring it Back Into the Flock, that It may, Evermore, Liſten to, and Follow the Call of Its *Heavenly Shepherd*, and Come to Him. Ye Denizens of The *Heavenly Jeruſalem*, Refuſe not Your Aſſiſtance to A poor Exile Wretch, ſurrounded with a Thouſand Dangers; And Help Me by Your Sacred Inſpirations, to Diſengage My ſelf from All *Earthly Things*, that I may be Admitted Into Your Communion, and Live with You Eternally, *In the Paradiſe of God. Amen.*



THE Ninth Inſtance OF THE SUFFERINGS OF Our BLESSED SAVIOUR.

CHAP. IX.

Upon the Senſe He had of the Murder of the Innocents.

1. THE Bleſſed Jeſus Was Retired Into *Egypt*; And Two Years were now already paſt from the Time of His Birth; Yet All this was not enough to Calm the Anguiſh of *Herod*'s Mind: As He had Reſolv'd upon the Death

Death of This NEW KING of the JEWS, ſo ſoon as Ever The Wiſe-men ſhould diſcover to Him the Place where That *Royal Innocence* Lay Conceal'd; And found that They had not made for *Jeruſalem* In their Way Back, But had Given Him the *Go-by*; He concluded that They had Smelt His Deſigns; And This Confirmed Him in his firſt Jealouſies and Fears, which chang'd His Diſſimulation into Rage; And made Him Take this Cruel Reſolution to Cut the Throats of All the Children in His Realm, for Fear This Bleſſed Infant ſhould Eſcape Him: He would not make Uſe of the Jews to find out This *Infant-King*, Becauſe He miſtruſted Them; Being Perſwaded, that They would Omit Nothing to Save Their Meſſias; So that, Probably, They might Put Another Child, In his Place; And that, ſhould He make Away but with *One*, He ſhould not Secure Himſelf In His Throne.

Having, therefore, finiſht thoſe Affairs which Retarded the Execution of this Barbarous Deſign, when He Thought the Noiſe which the Sages had Made, in *Jeruſalem*, was Quell'd and Laid aſleep; He Calculated the Time when They had Seen the Star; And finding that it was two Years ago, He Contriv'd ſome Pretence to Summon His Subjects, to Bring All their Children, that were Born within two Years, to One Particular Place, from *Bethlehem* and All the Adjacent Parts; And, As ſoon as They were Got together, He Commanded his Army, who were Quarter'd there on Purpoſe, to Butcher Thoſe Innocents, not ſparing a ſingle Babe of Them, Satisfying Himſelf, that The MESSIAS, He was ſo Apprehenſive of,

Could not fail of Being Diſpatcht, In this Univerſal Slaughter.

This ſoon fill'd the whole Country with BLOOD and TEARS! Every Place Ecchoed with the *Shrieks* and *Deſperate Lamentations* of thoſe BEREAVED MOTHERS, for the Barbarity Committed, upon the Children of their Womb, In ſo Tender and Helpleſs an Age; And whoſe Innocence, and Numbers Rendred the Maſſacre yet the more Cruel and Inhuman.

II. This General Diſtreſs was not, In the Leaſt, Softened, As it uſually is, In other Inſtances of Affliction, by the Multitude of Thoſe who had a Share in it: Theſe *Bereaved, Diſconſolate Mothers*, Augmented each others Deſpair; And fill'd Every Soul with Horrour and Compaſſion! So Un-heard-of A Cruelty, ſtartled the World with the Apprehenſions of what would follow: And, the Terrours of it, were ſo much the Greater, throughout All the Kingdom, As They were in a Condition ſo very Incapable to withſtand the Violence of ſo BARBAROUS A TYRANT.

One may Eaſily Imagin what Trouble, and Conſternation an Accident of this Nature, muſt needs Create In Any Nation! The Holy Prophet had foretold that it would be ſuch a Blow as would Make * *Mothers Childleſs, and not to be Comforted*; And † St. *Auſtin*, And ſeveral Others, of the Holy Fathers, Repreſent the Cries and Groans of theſe deſperate Mothers, In ſuch Lively Characters; And the Endeavours they us'd, *In vain*, to Hide, to Defend, and to Save their Tender Innocents, that it is Impoſſible for Any Heart, Not to be Melted at it. And, It is not without Reaſon, that they Paint this

* Jer. 31. 15.

† Serm. 10. de In.

Scene

Scene of *Blood*, and *Death*, and *Languiſhing*, after this manner: For 'tis not to be Imagin'd that the Children of a whole Region, And moſt of them Hanging on the Breaſt, could be Got together in any One Part of it without their Mothers with Them: And, No Words can Expreſs, with what Sorrows They were Pierc'd; what Exclamations and Shrieks they utter'd; or what Extravagance they Committed, when they ſaw, before their Eyes, that which was more Dear ro them, than All the World, Their Babes, Torn from their Breaſts; Stabb'd and Butcher'd, In that Deluge of Gore and Murder.

All this that happen'd, In *Judea*, was not A Secret, In *Egypt*, to the *Eternal Wiſdom* of the *Divine Infant*, on whoſe Account this *Diſmal Tragedy* had been Acted: The Cries of the Blood, which Ran from the little Veins of theſe Innocents, Reach'd even unto His Ear! And His Sacred Humanity, which Beheld All theſe Cruelties, As He was God; Was no leſs ſenſible, at the ſame Time, what Pain, what Anguiſh, Theſe Innocents felt, whilſt their Throats were Cutting; And what Swords of Sorrow Pierc'd their Tender Mothers Souls! For the Bleſſed Jeſus had A Heart Always Tender and Compaſſionate, Ever Sympathiſing with Thoſe who underwent Afflictions; As it is eaſy to Collect from the ſeveral Paſſages of His Life. III.

When the Crowd of People followed Him Into the Wilderneſs; He ſaid to His Diſciples, * *I have Compaſſion on the Multitude, Becauſe They have now been with me Three Days, and have Nothing to Eat!* When the Poor Widow, who * St. Mark 8. 2.

Lamented the Death of her Son, whom They were Carrying to his Grave, Approach'd, and Preſented her Self to The Bleſſed Jeſus, Near The Town of Naim, He was So Moved, with her Sorrow, that He * *Raiſed up her Son again from The Dead*; He Could not Bear to See The two Weeping Siſters, † *Sorrowing for the Loſs of their Brother, Four Dayes Buried*, But He Joyned In the Mournful Conſort; And *Mingled his Tears with Them.* Upon his Solemn Entry, Into *Jeruſalem*, Amidſt The Acclamations of The Peop'e, who went to Meet Him, with their *Palms* and *Olive Branches*, to Spread them In his Way, His Præſcience of thoſe Calamitys that would, One Time, Come upon THAT HOLY CITTY, Turn'd All his Glory Into a *Flood of Tears*, whilſt, In the Anguiſh of his Compaſſionate Soul, He Foretold The DESOLATION with which God would Revenge the EPIDEMICK GVILT of that INFATUATED PEOPLE.

* St. Luke 7. 15.

† St. John 11. 33, 35.

There are Many Other Inſtances, In the Holy Goſpel, from whence it Might be made Appear, How much The Bleſſed Jeſus felt the Sorrow of Afflicted Souls; How Great, Therefore, muſt his Compaſſion Needs have been, when He Sympathis'd, with Thoſe *Innocent Victims* to that FOREIGN *Tyrant's Fury*, which had not, Yet, been Sacrificed, But for his Sake! It was his Earneſt Deſire to have Died, In their Stead; And, had it been Anſwerable to the Divine Purpoſe, He would Willingly have Conſented to be Butcher'd In their Room, And to have Received a New Life, to Glut that Inhuman Prince's Rage withal, In Lieu of Every Soul that Died, thus, upon his Account: But Becauſe The Great Work of Our Redemption Required,

Required, that He muſt Still Live, and Reſerve Himſelf for a Much more Cruel Death, for the Salvation of Mankind; The Senſe He had of the Murther of So many Infants, And The Piercing Sorrow, of So many Wretched Mothers, whilſt He Eſcap'd, and Sav'd Himſelf by Flight, was a moſt bitter Pain to him, and Touch'd Him to the Soul: 'Tis True, the Time was Drawing on, when In a Few Years after, He ſhould Abundantly Recompence them The Death they Underwent, for his Sake, With A Crown of Glory, which He ſhould Purchaſe for Them, by Dying for Them In his Turn; But All, that His Divine Love and Providence had Determined Him to Do and to Suffer afterwards, did not In the Leaſt Abate that Sympathy and Compaſſion which made Such Impreſſion upon A Heart So Naturally Kind and Tender as his Was.

But The Mercy and Tenderneſs, of *Our Lord*, Extended, Yet, a Great Deal Farther; And It was One of the Greateſt Afflictions the Bleſſed Jeſus Felt, During the whole Courſe of his Pilgrimage In the World, to Think, what Miſeries The Children of Men ſhould Undergo, and muſt go through, tho' never ſo juſtly, whilſt They Liv'd In this State of Baniſhment from their Heavenly Country: For All Theſe Evils and Miſeries of Sinful Men, were Preſent, In Particular, to His *Eternal Wiſdom*.

To Give us A Light Into This Truth, there Needs Nothing more than to Reflect upon the Gracious Purpoſes of God In Our Creation, wherein Human Nature was form'd So Perfect, as not to be Obnoxious to The Miſeries to which we are, Now, Expoſed: The Purpoſe IV.

of God, In this, Was, on the Contrary, that We ſhould have Been Exempt from Pain and Sorrow; And, In the moſt Delightſome Enjoyments of an Innocent Life, have Paſt on, with Pleaſure, 'till we Were Tranſlated Into Heaven! Other Animals, that are Merely Corporeal, He Created Unto Death, and to Corruption: But, As for Mankind, Altho' his Earthly Part, like that of Other Senſitive Bodies, would Naturally Yeild to a Diſſolution; Yet God, In the Creation, Preſerved Him Alone, (by a Peculiar Sanction and Priviledge, Above All the Reſt, which He Confer'd upon him, In his Earthly Eden) free from the Attachs of Grief, and Hunger, and Thirſt, and Cold, and Heat, and Labour, and Death itſelf, and Every Other Incident that might be Grievous to Him: For, 'twas Determin'd, by The Divine Goodneſs, There ſhould be Something Intermediate, and Woven, In the Corporeal and Spiritual Nature of Man, of a Third Sort; which ſhould Incorporate the Senſitive, And Animal, Into the Angelick Being; That ſhould Deſtroy the Power of Mortality; And Sublime Our *Original Duſt*, Into An Incorruptible and Spiritual Eſſence, whereby It ſhould become Capable of Eternal Glory: God Made Choice of this Creature, In whom He had, if I may Preſume to Say So, United Heaven and Earth; to Work his Wonders In Him; To Communicate his Divine Perfections to Him; And to make Him the Center of His Self-Fruition! But Miſerable Mankind, Being Fallen, by his Tranſgreſſion, from This Happy State, The Merciful God, who, Yet, Would not Utterly Exterminate and Deſtroy Him; Found out a

Way,

Way, In his Incomprehenſible Wiſdom, By Sufferings, to Save A Creature, who had been So Wretched, as to Forfeit his Firſt Happy Condition.

V. This Unhappy Obſtacle, which Sin had Laid In the way, between the Glorious Purpoſes of The Divine Goodneſs, and The Felicity of Mankind, had been Afflicting Even to God Himſelf Could the Divine Nature have been Capable of Suffering: The Holy Scripture has This Phraſe Concerning God, that * *He was Grieved at The Heart, when The Tranſgreſſions of Mankind were Become Ripe for Judgment*, and *the Divine Juſtice was Provok'd, with that Univerſal Deluge, to Drown the World:* Not that God could be, *Actually*, Senſible, or *Really* Affected with any Grief or Pain; Or that He could poſſibly, under any Article of Time, or upon any Occaſion, *Repent Himſelf* of that which He had Decreed, from *All Eternity*, and Before Time Began; But, Becauſe, to Speak According to the Capacity of our Comprehenſion, He had Juſt Reaſon to be Diſpleas'd, whilſt the moſt Perfect Juſtice was Provok'd, and Under A Neceſſity to Let Flie his Vengence, In So Wrathful An Inſtance of Indignation, upon that Creature, of his Own Image, whom he had formed In A Condition to be for Ever Happy: But, what The Moſt Perfect God Could not Suffer, In His Divine Nature, He has moſt Senſibly felt, *In Ours*, which He has taken Into Himſelf: In *The Manhood*, He has Deplored, and Bewayl'd All Our Tranſgreſſions, and the Guilt of Our Souls, as if It had been his Own; And Labour'd under All the Mighty Weight, of Conſcious Torment,

* Gen. 6. 6.

Torment, as if his Own Immaculate Soul were *Tainted* with our Corruption.

Thus, The Bleſſed Jeſus, has, In the moſt Perfect manner, fullfill'd theſe Two Things in Reſpect to us; As God, and *Our Supreme Sovereign*, He makes, Even Our Miſeries Serve to Magnifie his Own Glory; and Promote Our Spiritual Advantage; As Man, Our Companion, and Our Brother, He has felt the Utmoſt Bitterneſs of Them; And would Never have Subjected us unto Them had He not been Obliged to it, By the Law of his Moſt Prefect Juſtice, and Divine Providence: At the very Inſtant when We are Labouring Under Pains and Sorrows, He Orders the Matter So, That Theſe Inſtances of God's Judgments upon Our Sins ſhall Become more Beneficial to us, than Even *That Paradiſe*, of Pleaſures, would have Been, which We had Loſt by the Tranſgreſſion of Our Firſt Parents; Of His Great Goodneſs, too, He Moderates, and Softens Them Unto us, And Takes the Greateſt Burden of Them upon Himſelf; That, Being Sanctified in Him, They Might Become the Seeds from whoſe Growth we ſhould have The Fruits of An Eternal Weight of Glory: By this Means He Re-eſtabliſhes the Firſt Purpoſes of His Providence and Bounty, which Were to Put us Into a Capacity of Being, for Ever, Happy In his Preſence, And In a State Above the Reach of Even Sin and Miſery, to All Eternity.

VI. If we are truly the Friends and Servants of God, we Ought to have two Things, conſtantly, In our View, which will be of the Greateſt Comfort to us, under All the Miſeries of This Life:

The

The first is That of St. *Austin*, who observes, * "*That The Holy Church, which Began with* Adam, "*and his Children, has Ever been Bathed, In Her* "*Blood, for the Glory of Her Heavenly Spouse*; "*That, This Innocent* Abel, *from the very Infancy of the World, has been Washt, in his own* "*Gore, through the Jealousie and Cruelty of the* "*Unnatural* Cain, *his Wicked Brother*; *That, at* "*The Advent of Our Blessed Saviour, The Holy* "*Innocents Sprinkled the Town and Suburbs, of* "Bethlehem, *with Those Purple Rivulets, from* "*their Hearts*; *That the Blessed Jesus Himself,* "*The very* IMMACULATE LAMB OF GOD, *has Consecrated the Church by His Own Blood, which,* "*Streamed from His Fierced Side, till that Sacred Fountain of Life was Exhausted: That the* "NOBLE ARMY OF MARTYRS *have shed theirs for the Churches Sake*; *And Those, who have not Gone so far, did not finish Their Course,* "*without some Marks of Their Profession, some* "*Tokens of Their Enlistment, and Faithful Suffering, In the Christian Warfare*; *For that We cannot be said to fight the Good Fight Under the Banner of A Crucified God, Nor Partake with Him* "*In His Glory, but by* THE CROSS".

* Lib. Quest. Vet Test. Q. 30.

There are Two Things, in Man, of which All other Creatures are Unworthy, And which Ought to be Devoted Only unto God: *viz.* The Heart, and the Blood; Or, to Speak In other Terms, To Love Him, and to Suffer for His Sake: For, the Holy Jesus has, In such Sort, Inhanc'd the Value of these Meritorious Instances of our Devotion, that they are Become not only more Precious than All the Treasures of the World besides; But even of more Worth

Worth than the moſt Exquiſite and *Beatifick Diſpenſations* of *Thoſe Upper Glories*: It is An Unaccountable Infatuation therefore, In Mankind, to Proſtitute themſelves ſo, And undergo ſo much Vexation and Turmoil as they do, for the Sake of this World; To Devote A Treaſure So Sacred, to Profane Uſes; which Renders All Our Labours fruitleſs, and to No Purpoſe; And, which, for the moſt Part, ſerve to no otner Effect than to Heighten our Guilt, and make us appear More Criminal In the Sight of God.

When *David* had a Deſire to Drink Water from the Well at *Bethlehem*, of which Place his Enemies were Become Maſters; And, Three of His Soldiers had fetcht Him ſome, from thence through the midſt of his Enemies Army, with the utmoſt Danger, and Hazard of their Lives; when He came to Conſider HOW DEAR this Water Coſt, He Concluded that it Ought to be Given to None but God; And, therefore, inſtead of Drinking it Himſelf, to Quench his Thirſt, * *He pour'd it on the Ground in Sacrifice to God, As The Blood of the Men that went in Jeopardy of their Lives*; And therefore, It could be the Only Right of that Almighty God, to whom Alone We Owe All Our Cares and Labours: Would Men but Manage, after this Manner, They would find therein the Sweetneſs of Their Endeavours; And not Squander away the Beſt Part of their Lives, as they do, to no Purpoſe; Or, Rather, In Working out their own Deſtruction; whoſe Unhappy Ruin is owing to This, that for the Sake of this Fading, Tranſitory World, they Proſtitute A Heart that is only Due to God, and of which, He

* 2 *Sam.* 23. 16, 17.

He is ſo Jealous, that He Cannot Bear Any Rival in it. God Almighty Requites All our Affection; Becauſe Love draws Every Thing elſe After it, Pleaſure, Thoughts, Application, and Labour; And takes up the Whole Man, *Body* and *Soul*: Therefore, When We truly Devote our Love to God, who only Can Deſerve it, We Sacrifice, then, the moſt Perfect, the moſt Complete, the moſt Acceptible, of *All Poſſible Oblation.*

VII. The other Conſideration is, that God, who Expected to Impart His Delights to us, finding His firſt Intentions croſs'd; And not Contented to Reſerve for us, the Sweetneſs and Raviſhing Communications of Himſelf, till we ſhall Arrive at thoſe Bleſſed Abodes of Glory; has found out the Means to give us a Taſte of it, In this very State of our Mortality, and Corruptible Life; From hence 'tis, that, to Comfort the *Fallen World* Under the Privation of the Terreſtrial Paradiſe, they have Loſt, He imparts to them more Plentifully His Divine Graces, Amidſt the Troubles of this painful Life, than they Would have Received, even under the moſt Delightful Entertainments of *Eden*; For, By this Single Inſtance of His Enlightening them with the Knowledge of the Amazing Work of His Love; He ſo Inflames them with a Deſire to Pleaſe Him, to Obey Him, to Devote their Whole Self to Him, that Being, In a Manner, Inebriated with theſe Divine Charms, They are no longer The Men They Were, but All the Struggles and Powers They Exert Towards God, become Their Pleaſure; And All Worldly Pleaſure Bitter to them; And They Enjoy Themſelves as much Under the moſt

most Preſſing and the Greateſt Sufferings, As if They Taſted the moſt Sweet and Delicious Repaſts.

St. *Juſtin*, In his Diſcourſe to The *Romans*, upon The Faith of The Martyrs, tells us, That the Main Reaſon that Induc'd Him to Embrace The Chriſtian Faith, from The Pagan Philoſophy, He had been brought up In, was the Cheerfulneſs and Joyful Aſpect that Appear'd In the Faces of thoſe Martyrs whilſt they were under the Actual Torments of the Gridiron and the Wheel; He could not Perſwade Himſelf that it was poſſible for the Only Thing In the World which is moſt Terrible to Human Nature, to be Endur'd with Joy, unleſs God had Communicated, to Them, ſome Divine Illaps, of His Spirit, which chang'd that Cruelty, which Human Nature muſt needs ſhrink at, Into A Scene of Raviſhing Delight and Pleaſure. But This Holy Martyr Adds, that, After He had Embrac'd the Chriſtian Faith, He was Convinc'd, from His own Experience, *That there is no Corporeal Pain whatſoever, Let it be never ſo Unnatural and Frightful, that can ſtifle that Inward Joy that the Bleſſed Jeſus Communicates to Thoſe that Suffer for His Sake.*

The Holy Apoſtle Relates his Labours, and Afflictions, as So Many Triumphs; And the Royal Prophet Cries Out with Admiration, * *O How Great is Thy Goodneſs which Thou haſt Laid up for Them that Fear Thee! Thou ſhalt Hide Them In the Secret of Thy Preſence, againſt the Inſults of Men.* That is to ſay, Thou Defendeſt Them; Thou doſt Protect and Secure Them, by a Secret Knowledge of Thy Perfections, and by

* *Pſ.* 31. 19, 20.

by the Inward Communication of Thy Charms: Not that They do not feel the Torments they are under, But 'tis, as one may Call it, that They are Allay'd, and Softned; Or, to say, Absorpt and Swallow'd up, In An Ocean, of the Most Refined Joys, which the World cannot Perceive; which *The Eye hath not Seen, Nor the Ear heard, and which Love Alone, Can be sensible of:* And God, at such a Time, is Infinitely more Glorified by That Sacred Joy which His Suffering Martyrs Testifie In Their Torments, than If they had Continued In *Paradise* without that Original Transgression! And They Themselves are not less Happy; Because the Pure Love, They Bear to God, Creates, to Them A New, and More Delightful *Paradise*, out of the Torments They Endure, for His Sake; This Flowing of Secret Joy, 'tis true, May Not be Communicated to All that Travel thro' these Flames and Torments to the Kingdom of God; But Every Soul, under these Dispensations, has, at least, *This*, to Comfort Him, In His Sorrows, That whatever He Endures, for God's Sake, is, for His Advantage; And Infinitely Meritorious, when He Suffers with Patience: And, if the Troubles and Afflictions of this World, are not Attended Here, with those *Floods* of Spiritual Joys, which some have felt, under them, They will not fail to Become the Seeds, which shall bring forth Fruit to Our Everlasting Rest and Comfort.

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon The Death of The Holy Innocents.

I. I Render Thee, Moſt hearty Thanks, Moſt Divine Saviour! For All thoſe Favours Thou haſt Beſtow'd upon me; Not So many as Thou Deſireſt, But as much as the Lukewarmneſs of my Soul will Let me: Thou art the *Strength of my Heart*, and *My Hope*; Lord! Therefore, of thy Goodneſs, Do Thou Supply whatever is Wanting In my Weakneſs; Thou Art my Happineſs; The End and utmoſt Scope of All my Wiſhes, and Deſigns! If My Love Cannot Expand Enough nor Reach the Dignity of its moſt Amiable Object, Let me, at Leaſt, fill my Soul with Thee as Much as It will hold! Thou Seeſt Into the Bottom of My Heart, And All the Sentiments of My Soul which Thou haſt Created; But as Thou haſt Inſpir'd me with a Deſire after Thee; And, that Nothing Can be So Happy for me, Diſpoſe My Soul to Such a Frame, as that it may Unite to Thee According to thy Deſire; Teach me how to put a true Value upon the Favours of thy Love, that I may Not Receive them without Fruit: Thy Omnipotence has Drawn me out of Nothing;

And

And thy Holy Spirit has Sanctified me, In My Baptiſm; Thy Gracious Goodneſs has Supported me; It has Forbore me, and Forgiven me! Thy Great Love, to Souls, has brought Thee Down, from Heaven, Into A Miſerable World, In which Thou haſt Made thoſe Miſeries familiar to Thee, which I, with Juſtice, am Encompaſs'd with: There's Nothing that I have, Nothing I can Hope for, In which I am not Indebted unto Thy Mercy; And without *That* I am Nothing! I Labour, And I am at Reſt; I Go Out and I come In; I vex and Fatigue my Self, About thoſe *Vanitys* that have Nothing, *of Thee*, In them; And which Pollute my Soul; Embaſe My Nature; Degrade, and Stain the Glory of My Image; And Bereave me of the Treaſures of Thy Grace and Goodneſs!

When Wilt Thou Come, to Help and Succour thy Poor Diſtreſſed Creature, O Thou who art *My Salvation*, and my Only *Refuge!* I Behold my Self Encompaſs'd with Diſtreſs and Miſeries, on Every Side; Above me are Interpos'd Thick Clouds of Darkneſs, which Rob my Eyes of the Celeſtial Glories; Below me, The Corruption of Senſual and Earthly Temptations; The uproar and Confuſion of my Paſſions, All Around me; The Vanity's and Follys, of The World, before me; Behind me, the Neglect of true Felicity; Within me, the Privation of Thy Knowlege and thy Love! And am dſt All theſe Obſtacles, that Oppoſe, and Set themſelves againſt My Happineſs, I am So Blind as to Imagin I can Live without Thee; And am Inſenſable of the Want I have of thy Aſſiſtance. O Thou *Supreme Felicity*, Out of which I meet with Nothing but what is Evil! O Thou *Life of my Soul*, without which I am, Ever, Wan-

dering In *The Shadow of Death!* O Thou, who art *The Light of Mine Eyes!* Without which I walk Continually In Outer Night and Darkneſs! Aſſiſt my Poverty; Support my Weakneſs! And Take away theſe Miſts from my Soul!

II. Thou Knoweſt that I can Do Nothing Without Thee! And upon that Account Thou art Come to Search me Out, that I may find *That*, In Thee, which I cannot Meet with In my Self! Thou art Cloathed with my Fleſh, that I might have, In Thee, A Companion In my Miſeries; Thou haſt Undergone the Torments which were my Due, that Thoſe I Meet with Might be Leſs Grievous! And that, By the Sight of what Thou haſt Undergone, I might be Senſible what Great VENGEANCE I Deſerve! I Adore Thee, Thou True Comforter! Alaſs! What am I Good for, Unto Thee! And What Advantage doſt Thou find, In Diſpenſing Thy REFRESHMENTS to Such a Miſerable Wretch as I am! Am I not Treated According to my Deſert, when I am Oppreſt with Infirmity, Over-Burdened with Sadneſs, with Vexation and Diſquiet; And, All Other the Miſeries of This Painful Life! Is it not Very Juſt that I ſhould bear the Pain, Since I Committed the Iniquity, which Drew it on! That I Only ſhould be Puniſh'd, Since it is my Self Only that Tranſgreſs'd! Why then, Moſt Divine Saviour, Wilt thou Bear a Part, In my Afflictions! It Seems as if Thou wert Only Come, Into This World, to *Weep* and *Labour*, and to Sweat with Sorrow! to be Tempted, Perſecuted, Outrag'd, Betrayed and Forſaken! To Undergo the Severitys of Poverty and Baniſhment, Torments and Death! And, In a Word, All the Miſeries which

which I Endure, and Many Other, a Great Deal more Severe Ones, which I cannot Go through, Because Thou wouldst not Only help me to Bear Mine, But also Make me feel, how Justly They are my Due.

How True, O Lord! did Thy Holy Apostle Speak, when He told us, that * *We have not An High Priest who Cannot be Touched with The Feeling of Our Infirmities*, Since, *Excepting Sin, Thou hast Experienced All Sorts of Miseries*; And that the Experience Thou hast of them Makes Thee truly Sensible of Ours! When Thou Wast Upon Earth, The Evils, I was to go through During the Whole Course of my Life, were Present to thine Eternal Wisdom. Thou wert Touched with them, *Then!* Like A Tender Father, Thou, Thy Self, didst Feel Every Stroke I was to Receive, from thy Hand; And, at the Same time, Thou didst Direct them So, as to Turn Those Painful Instances of thy Providence, to my Advantage; Tell me, then, O Thou Heavenly Pastor of my Soul! How can I So bitterly Complain and Murmur at Thy Chastisments, Knowing how Strong an Impression They make In *Thy Fatherly Compassion!* How is it, that I don't Confess how Very Advantagious They are Unto me, by the Pain thy Self Feelest Every Stroke Thou Givest me!

* Heb. 4. 15.

III. Oh! How Deplorable is my Ignorance and Error! Thou Shewest me, *O Thou Heavenly Beauty*, the Tenderness of thy Heart, and The Wisdom with which Thy Providence Directs me; Thou Discoverest thy Paternal Bowels, (Even in thy Correction) to me; And Thy Bounty changes All those Temporal Evils, I so justly Undergo, Into ETERNAL *Benefits, and*

Bleſſings to my Soul! Who is like Unto Thee, O *Father of Mercys*! The World Puts Its Criminals to Death, and There's an End on't; But Thou, moſt Gracious Lord, Whilſt Thou art Crucifying The Sinner, doſt feel his Anguiſh; Thou Enableſt him with Patience! And *Then*, Thou Rewardeſt that very Grace, Thou haſt Beſtow'd upon him, With No Leſs A Recompence than Eternal Life! When Human Juſtice takes hold on The Guilty, The Unhappy Wretch Gets Nothing, There, but Infamie, and Pain; But when Thou, In Mercy, doſt Correct us, here Below, we are made Amends, upon the Spot, for the Pain we Suffer! For, by Leading us to Repentance, for Our Sins, Thou doſt Fill Our Hearts with a Moſt Senſable Conſolation; The World Caſts us Down to Deſtroy us; But when Thou doſt Smite us, LORD, It is that Thou mayſt Save us; The World Loads us 'till we are Quite Oppreſs'd and Overwhelmed; But Thou Putteſt on us the Burden, that Thou Mayſt Make us Taſt the Sweets of thy Refreſhments.

O My God! My Strength! My Reſt! My Conſolation! How is it Poſſible that My Heart ſhould not be Enflamed with a Deſire to Serve, and to Pleaſe Thee! Thou art not Content to Comfort me, In the Extremity of my *Pains* and *Miſeries*; And to Draw, that Weight, of *Eternal Glory*, Out of Them, which Thou Preparedſt for me; But, to ſhew how Bountiful Thou Art to Thoſe whom Thou Chaſtiſeſt, Thou even Makeſt Them Enamour'd of their Sorrows; And, Sometimes Thou doſt form them Into Such a Diſpoſition, that They Can as well ceaſe to Breath as Not to be Mortifying themſelve

to

to *Gain Thee!* Reveal unto Me, O Lord, these Divine, Myſterious Secrets! Teach me, the Way how I ſhall Glory In the Croſs! And, Let me find out, THERE, the Secret Treaſure thou haſt Reſerv'd and Wrapt up, In it, for Thoſe that Love Thee! For whom ſhall I waſte my Self, O my Love, If it be not for Thee! When Thou doſt Attach me to Thee; When I Embrace Thee Cloſe; And Am Raviſht with Thy Love; I can feel Neither Injuries nor Diſgraces, Nor Poverty, Nor Contempt, Nor Perfidious Treachery, Nor Any other Affliction, whatſoever; All my Sorrows and Vexations are, as it were, Drown'd and Swallow'd up In Thee, And Thy Preſence Tranſmutes, Even Any Thing Into the Sweeteſt Repaſt and Nouriſhment to My Soul; What can All this Mean, My Deareſt God! Doſt Thou, Deſign, In the Laviſh of Bounty, to Make Every Thing Become Heaven to me!

But Thou art He, my Soul Breaths after, O my God! Open the Door of my Heart, and Enter In, *There*; Or elſe Set, *Thine Own*, Open unto Me, that I may Enter Into Thy Joy, Into Thy Love, and Into Thy Knowledge: Thou art ſo Deſirous to Impart Thy Glory to me, that Thou canſt not ſtay till I be In Thy Manſion: Thou giveſt me to Taſte of THY MANNA, *Here*; To Anticipate thy Sweets, In this Foreign World, by the Enchantments of Thy Preſence! O Thou Heavenly Love! Thou Faithfulleſt of All Friends! Hear the Cravings of My Heart, which forgetting its Baniſhment, is Warbling In a Gentle Tranſport, The Triumphs of Thy Mercy! Liſten to its Voice, O

Lord! For unto Thee Alone it ſpeaks; And All its Motions are Directed to Thee.

O how Sweet and Gentle is My Love! How Charming is My Well-Beloved! My Soul Diſſolves and Melts All Into Thee, My God! It only Languiſhes and Sighs for Thee, My Only Treaſure, My Joy, My Hope, My Glory! Oh! My God! and My All! O that I might, here, Loſe, In Thee, All, that is not Thy Self, Thy very Eſſence! O Let Thy Love Quicken, In Me! That I may have No Life, Nor Motion but In Thee, O My God, O My Love!

IV. Give me ſome juſt Idea's Moſt Endearing Saviour! of the Exuberance and Exceſs of Thy Love! And the Bitter Pains with which it Rents Thy Heart; Tell me, if Thou pleaſe, which Suffer'd moſt, upon the Murder of thoſe Inoffenſive Innocents? Whether Thoſe Diſtreſſed Mothers, Pierc'd with the Pungent Anguiſh, who were Bereaved of their Children? Or did the Tender Babes feel Greater Pain, while the Daggers were within them? Or Thy Self, whoſe Life was Saved by the Butchery of theirs? The Afflictions of thoſe Matrons could not Exceed the Bounds of Natural Affection; The *Little Victims* felt the Stabs, of the Barbarians; But They had no Previous, no Conſcious Apprehenſions, to ſtartle the Soul, with the Terrours of that Cruelty; But, As for Thee, *Thou Dear Deliverer of Souls!* Thy Grief proceeded from the Bowels of an Infinite Compaſſion! 'Twas the Reſult of A Love Sublimate and Refined; A Flame that Kindled with Deſire to Exchange A Life for every one of theirs: Might One preſume

ſume to Dive Into the Motives that Induc'd Thee, O Moſt Tender Father, to Permit that ſo many of thoſe *Bleeding Martyrs* ſhould be Butcher'd to Save Thy Life! Since the Only Purpoſe of Thy Coming Into the World, was to Give LIFE AND SALVATION to All Mankind, at the Expence of Thine Own! Pardon me, Bleſſed Lord! For I can ſee thro' this Amazing Miracle, that appears ſo, Under the Form of a Contradiction! And All this is but A Contrivance and Invention of Thy Love! It is to Inhance and Aggravate Thine Own Sorrows, that Thou diſpenſeſt, In Thy Providence, ſuch a ſevere Article upon Them; They Receiv'd not a Stab that did not Pierce through Thy Heart; And Thou art Under the *Agonies of Death* for each of them, Becauſe Thy Love Allow'd Thee not to Die with Them.

But, to Gratifie This Thy Love, and the Emulation Thou didſt Bear to Theſe Innocent Victims, Thou Didſt, from that very Moment, Sentence Thine Own Moſt Precious Body to the Severeſt Torments! For the Life of A Few Years Continuance which They Sacrific'd to Thine, Thou haſt prepar'd for Them a Better Life, That ſhall never have End, by the Death Thou ſhouldſt Suffer; And Thou haſt already Undergone the Pains of Death, In Them, till the Time Thou ſhould'ſt Die for Them; And Thus it is, Moſt Bleſſed Lord! that Thou Wouldſt not Suffer thoſe INFANT-MARTYRS, Even whilſt they were Bleeding and Expiring for Thee, to Endure ſo much as Thy Self! Since there is not One of them whoſe Sufferings, Thou haſt not felt in Addition to Thine

Own: Beſides, Thou didſt Determine, that whilſt they were under that Tragedy upon Thy Account, they ſhould find the Ineffable Conſolation to Live In Thee; And, under the Heighth and Paroxyſm of their Temporal Afflictions, Meet the Joyful Aſſurance of an *Eternal Felicity*: Bleſſed Be Thy Boundleſs Liberality for Ever! Can any Soul be Poor or Deſtitute with Thee, O My God! In Whom is The *Plenarty*, and Full Fruition of *All* The *Riches of Divine Love!*

V. What a Diſadvantage is it, to me, Miſerable Wretch that I am! to fly the Croſs only to Flatter and Indulge this Corruptible Body! Whenever My Duty calls Me, to Faſting for My Sins, how it Frets and Vexes Me! I am No Sooner at My Prayers, than I Flagg, and am Tired ere I have, almoſt, Begun to Speak with My God! If I Retire, for Contemplation, Into ſome Solitary Place, Heavineſs and Diſquiet Overtakes me; And if I Reflect, In ſilent Thought, it ſoon Sinks me Into A Dull and Melancholly Sadneſs! I am Impatient under Pain; Weak and Frail In Temptations; Conſtant In the Pleaſures of Senſe and Sin; Unable to Quit Any Thing for Thy Sake! And I look on it, as Thrown Away; My Time, or whatever elſe I am Devoting to Thee! I dare not ſtand the Encounter with my Paſſions; Am afraid of every Thing that would Give me the Leaſt Uneaſineſs; And Fail, and Sink like a Coward, under every Oppoſition that would take off, from the Exceſſes of my Depraved Will! O my Cold and Frozen Heart! O my Ungenerous and Ingrateful Soul! How far am I from a Diſpoſition, or Deſire to Sacrifice my Life,

Life, for Thy Sake, O my God! Or Envying Their Happineſs, who have Seal'd their Love to Thee with their Blood! Is it Thus that I make my Return to Thy Exceeding Love! I neither ſee a Naked Sword, nor a Suffering Martyr, yet I tremble at the Thoughts of 'em; And fly, at the very Sight of the *Lighteſt Croſs*; How then Can I ſhed my Blood for Thee, Moſt Merciful Father! What a wretched Creature 'tis Thou Loveſt ſo! for whom Thou Chooſeſt the CROWN OF THORNS, the NAILS AND SPEAR; And ſheddeſt thy Precious Blood for his Sake!

Have Pity on me, O my God! Awaken my Drowſineſs and Inſenſibility! Support my Weakneſs! O Raiſe my fallen Courage! And Give me Strength to undergo whatever I ſhall meet with, In the Courſe and ſeveral Stages of my Duty! In the Mortification of my Body, Or the Exerciſes of Thy Love! Remember that Expreſſion of Thine, O Lord! * *You can do Nothing without me!* Alas! Thou ſeeſt In the Bottom of My Heart, The Truth of Theſe Words! How many Times haſt Thou diſcovered to me the Dangers to which I was Expos'd; And whiſper'd Thy Inward Admonitions to my Soul to be upon its Guard; To Diſtruſt its own Motions; To Deny my ſelf, and fly from Criminal Pleaſures! But ſuch a Slave am I grown, to my Paſſions; And ſo Rivetted to my Exceſſes, that, for fear of Parting with them, I am Become Deaf to Thy Voice! If, at any Time, My Miſgiving Heart Prompteth me to Quit this Hateful Vaſſalage, and Thraldom; I am ſtill for Procraſtinating it a Little Longer! And, at the very Time, when I am come to theſe Reſolutions,

* St. John 15. 5.

tions, I dread the Torment of A Separation, more than the Danger of my Habitual Excesses: Strange, Unaccountable Illusion! And Wretched Infatuation! which makes me Dread, for fear I should be Saved!

Assist me, therefore, O Thou, that art the *Strength of my Heart!* And Break these Chains that Bind me down so Fast! But, Do not Delay, † *Lest mine Enemy say, He hath prevailed against Me.* Thou, O Lord, ‖ *Who Openest Thy Hand, and fillest All Things Living with Thy Blessing*; Who **Sendest out Thy Light and Thy Truth*; *Who Givest Strength to The Feeble, and Victory to Them that are Overcome*; Remember that as Frail and Miserable as I am, still I am as much The Creature of Thy Goodness, as Any that Thou hast made, and Sacrific'd Thy Life for: Remember that when Thou Camest to Seek Thy *Lost Sheep*, Thou wast not Content to send them Back, Into Thy Fold, But Thou didst Carry them thither Thy Self, Because They were, *Too far*, Gone Astray to find the Way Back, again, of themselves: I am One of These Lost Sheep! Do Thou therefore seek me Out; OBlessed Shepherd! For I have Wandered and Am gone Astray! Do Thou find me Out; for I am Lost; Carry me to The *Living Fold*, for I can Never of my feeble Self, Get thither, And Restore me to *Thy Sheep-fold.*

† Ps. 13. 4.

‖ Ps. 104. 28.

* Ps. 43. 3.

From whence could it be, My God, that *Herod* should Imagin, There was No Other Way for him to Secure his Crown, but by Taking away Thy Life! Wherefore did He Murder so Many Innocents, Under the Assurance that Thou must Needs be, One, of that Number! He was Resolv'd then, that He would Neither Live

Live not Reign with Thee, who Art the moſt *Puiſſant Prince*, The *Lord of Life*, and *By Whom* All *Kings Reign*! And yet, Alas! The more I Abhor That Tyrant, and His Barbarity, The Greater Reaſon I find In me to Condemn My Self! Thou knoweſt, O Lord, whither I Reſemble Him; And it may be Thou mayſt ſee In me, the very ſame Inclination; The ſame Seeds of Diſpoſition to Sin, that were In Him, Although I had no Hand In the Murder of thoſe Innocents.

How often have I Endeavour'd to Support my Own Reputation, at the Expence of my Neighbour's, to whom Thou haſt Commanded *To do No Wrong*? How Often Have I, againſt Thine Expreſs Law and Commandment; And, under the Proſpect of *Self-Intereſt*, Endeavour'd baſely to Impoſe upon A Friend, by Flattering him in the Wrong; to the Prejudice of the Truth, and Reproach of Vertue! How many of Thy Divine Graces have I ſtifled in my Soul, O Infinite Bounty! Thou ſeeſt, every Day I live, A Numberleſs Generation of theſe Irregularities, and yet Thou Beareſt with me Still! The Employment of Worldlings is to Break Thy Law; To Extirpate Vertue, and to Deſtroy Souls; This is Their Study, All Their Care, and Induſtry: And I Suffer my Self to be Carried Away wirh this Stream! I forget Thee, My God! And Am A Greater Murderer of My Self, than *Herod* was, of the Innocents, when He Cut their Throats: And, in the Hurry of My Paſſions, and the Confuſion which I am thrown into, by My Sins, I Perceive, My Self, no more than He did, That, All this while,

Thou

Thou Escapest me, and that I lose the God of my Life! I think that I can Live, and Act, and Support My Self, without Thy Help, who art The LIFE, The STRENGTH, and the SUPPORT OF ALL CREATURES; It is Thy Gracious Purpose that I should Reign; And to Enrich me, by that Grace of being *Poor In Spirit*; But, In This, I Run directly Counter to Thy Will, and Disappoint the Designs of Thy Goodness, by Destroying that Grace In me, through a Desire of being Rich; Thou wouldst make me Great, by Humility, And I Reject that Principle Out of An Ambition to Rise High! And Thou wouldest Exalt me, by the Way of Patience, to A *State of Glory*; And, instead of That, by Violence I Break through the Bounds Thou hast Set me, And, by An Haughty Pride, Precipitate my Self Into the *Place of Torment and Confusion of Face, for Ever.*

Thus, In All Things, I am Opposite, and Run Counter to Thee, my Heavenly Guide! As if, like *Herod*, I was Afraid to Meet with Thee! Yet, What am I, O Lord! Without Thee! What else, But a Poor and Wretched Creature, Abandoned and far from Eternal Life, and All True Happiness! Take Pity of me, O my God! And do not Suffer me to Pursue the Dictates of my Own Corrupt Heart; Grant me, Not that which My Distemper'd Soul Thirsts after, But what is *Convenient* and *Proper* for me! Ah! Blessed Lord! Rather let my Lot be *That* of the *Poor Martyr'd Innocents*, than to Enjoy A CROWN, with the GUILT OF BLOOD and USURPATION, As That Tyrant did!

Give

Give me Grace, that I may Begin, this very Moment, to Die unto My Self, and to Live In Thee! Inſpire me with the Love for Thy Law; with a Veneration for Thy Word and Doctrine; And with an Entire Submiſſion and Reſignation to Thy Bleſſed Will! Grant that I may, moſt Earneſtly Breath after, and Build up My Self from the Foundation of Thy Precepts; though Thou ſhouldeſt pleaſe to Call Me to the Shedding of my Blood, Rather than to fail in my Steddy Obedience to Thy Truth; That I may Live Only from Thee; And Die upon Occaſion for Thy Sake! Lord, Put Thou An End to All my Miſeries! For They Cannot be Conquered but through Thee! O Let me not wiſh Even any Cheering Light, Let me Deſire Neither Strength nor Life, for Any other Purpoſe, but to Conſume them in Thy Love and Service. It Cannot Diminiſh Any Thing of Thy Glory, Thou God of my Soul, to Fill Thy Bleſſed Manſions with Penitent and Convert Sinners, As well as with Thoſe Bleſſed Martyrs, who have teſtify'd their Love to Thee, with their Blood; Or thoſe Holy Innocents Conſecrated, by their *Untimely Death*, unto Thee! Gloriſie Thy Self then in me Alſo, My Deareſt Saviour! by Drawing me unto Thee by the fragrant Odour of Thy Perfumes Thy moſt Divine Vertues! Penetrate the Marrow of my Heart; Enflame it with Thy Love! Make it to Hate the World, And Burn, perpetually, with a Deſire of Enjoying Thee!

O Most Holy Mother of God! O Secure Refuge of Sinners! Who hast Always Liv'd In Jesus Christ, And hast had such A Share In the *Misteries* [illegible] of *His Incarnation*; Awaken My poor Soul, that's Dead In Sin, by Thine Intercession! And Ye, Happy Spirits! Who, by the Power and Bounty of This Divine Saviour, are now Reigning Triumphant In His Glory; Inspire and Minister some Part of that Grace Unto Me, that I also may Live and Reign With You for Ever. *Amen.*

THE

[redacted]

THE Tenth Instance OF THE SUFFERINGS OF Our Blessed Saviour.

CHAP. X.

Upon His Perfect Obedience.

AFTER *Herod* was Dead, and All the Rest of his Accomplices, who had Plotted the Death of the Blessed Jesus; St. *Joseph*, being Advertis'd of it by an Angel, Departed Out of *Egypt*, to Return Into *Judea*, with The *Holy Infant* and His *Mother*: But, being Inform'd that *Archelaus* Reigned 1.

Reigned There, In his Fathers Place, He Stopt at *Nazareth*, A Town of *Galilee*, fearing Leaſt *Archelaus*, who was Succeſſor to *Herod*, In his Kingdom, Might Inherit alſo his *Cruel* and *Tyrannical* Diſpoſition: As *Joſeph* and *Mary* went, Every Year, According to God's Appointment, to The Temple of *Jeruſalem*; The Sacred Child, when He Came to be Twelve Years of Age, went Thither along with Them: But, So it Happened that They Loſt him In The Temple; Where having at Laſt, Found Him, Three Dayes Afterwards, They Carry'd Him Back, with Them, to *Nazareth*: The Goſpel takes no Notice of what He did, from *That* Time, 'till He came to be full *Thirty Years* Old; Only that * *He was Obedient to Them*: And This Very Article, of His OBEDIENCE is The *Abſtract* of his Life, and of his Doctrine; And the Foundation of All his Labours: And, According to the Senſe and Language of that Great Apoſtle, the Original and Spring of All His Glory: † *He Became*, Says He, *Obedient unto Death, Even the Very Death of the Croſs; Wherefore hath God alſo Highly Exalted Him, and Hath Given Him A Name which is Above Every Name.*

* St. Luke 2. 51.

† Phil. 2. 8. 9.

The *Firſt* Words of His, Mention'd In The Goſpel, Were Expreſſions of OBEDIENCE, ‖ *Wiſt Ye Not, Said He, that I muſt be about My Father's Buſineſs?* And, It was God's Pleaſure, that we Should be Let Into no Other Particulars of his Life, 'till He Came to the *Thirtieth Year* of It, Only that He was Subject to Thoſe whom The Father Had Given Him for His *Superiours.*

‖ St. Luke 2. 49.

When

When He began to Converſe with Mankind, His Diſcourſes were, Generally, upon *This Topick*, That * *He Came Down from Heaven to Do His Father's Will*; † *That His meat Was to Do The Will of Him that Sent Him*; That ‖ *His Doctrin was not his Own but His Fathers*; That * *The Cup which He came to Drink, for us, was That which His Father had Given to Him:* Theſe were the Uſual Entertainments from his Mouth; And the Laſt Words That He Pronounc'd, when He was Juſt Ready to Expire, upon The Croſs, were † *It is Finiſhed!* ‖ *Father! Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit!* That is I have Accompliſht, O My Father! All that Thou haſt Determined, Concerning me; And, with my Dying Breath I Leave, to Thy Diſpoſal, my Life, my Death, The Sufferings of My Un-offending Soul, And The ENERGY of thoſe Merits, which this *Immaculate Sacrifice* has *Purchas'd!*

* St. John 6. 38. † Ch. 4. 34. ‖ Ch. 7. 16. * Ch. 18. 11. † Ch. 19. 30. ‖ St. Luke 23. 46.

II. There is No Form of Words whereby it can be, poſſibly, Expreſs'd or Explain'd In what Dependent Condition The Bleſſed Jeſus Liv'd, and Dy'd; And, Upon this Account it is, that St. *Luke* has Repreſented This Myſterious Article, of his *Thirty Years* Converſation, In Private Subjection to his Parents, Under This Single Word and Characteriſtick of OBEDIENCE, which He Could not Explain by Any Other: And, The Reſt of the Evangeliſts have Said Nothing of it: For who Can be So Exact as to Diſtinguiſh Between that *Perfect Nicety* with which The Bleſſed Virgin, and the Reputed Father, of This INCARNATE-GOD, Preſumed upon the Authority to Command Him, And, that *Perfect Obedience*, which He Paid Them;

The Reſpect, And Humble Deference of the Sacred Virgin-Mother In Regard to Him, who Was Her Son, And her God too; And, with what Reluctancy She Preſumed to Command Him, Yet She Exerted the Authority of A Mother; For She Knew that it was *The Will of God* It ſhould be So; And that, by Commanding Him She was Obedient to His Father: *Joſeph*, as the Head of the Family, was Reſpected by The *Mother* and the *Son*; And, This Superiority Infinitely Humbled Him: The *Heavenly Child*, Behav'd, towards Them Both, with *A Silent Reſpect, and Joy*, As to Thoſe, who Repreſented God, his Father: Behold, In this Inſtance, A Filial Obedience, which, without Doubt, was more Perfect than Ever had been Expreſs'd Even In Heaven, or upon Earth.

Nevertheleſs All theſe Wonders were hidden from the Eyes of the World: *Joſeph* and *Mary* paſt, Only, for *Good* and *Diſcreet Parents*, Among the People, And, the Bleſſed Jeſus for a Dutiful Son: In Particular they Obſerv'd, moſt Religiouſly, the *Law of God*, And Liv'd According to their Condition by the Work of their Own Hands. Our Saviour Workt with St. *Joſeph*; And Helpt him, In Every thing, as Much as his Age and Strength Would Permit. Only God Knew with what Sentiments This *Reputed* Father, and Mother, Accepted the Service of *Such A Son*, whom They Knew to be Their CREATOR; They Wonder'd at His Humility, His Obedience, His Condeſcention, to Work, Like a Common Labourer; And, Familiarity Abated Nothing, In Them, of That Profound Reſpect and Reverence They Paid Him,

Him, whom they would not have Preſum'd to Enjoyn, Any Thing of this Nature, had it not been Out of Expreſs Compliance with the Will of God. They Learnt, from His Sacred Lips, The *Myſteries of Heavenly Doctrine*; Which He Communicated to Them, Oftentimes, purely, In Anſwer to Their Commands: At the End of Their Days Work, they Uſually Retired to Prayer; But with what *Elevated Devotion* Muſt Theirs Needs have Been, when They Had their VERY GOD, Before Their Eyes! what Flows of the Celeſtial warmth and Graces did not Stream Upon Them, from That *Pure Fountain!* It Muſt Needs have been Wonderful, to Behold The INCOMPREHENSIBLE GOD Subject to *His Creature*; The ETERNAL WORD at the Command of A Carpenter; And The SUPREME MAJESTY Of HEAVEN, Condeſcending to the Low Employments of a Poor and *Indigent Familie.*

They that Liſt themſelves Into Trades and Occupations In the World, Limit their Apprentiſh-ſhip to A Certain term of Years; All which time they Live In Hopes of the Day when their Servitude ſhall Expire, and They ſhall Become *Maſters*, Themſelves: The Slave Supports himſelf with Hopes of his Liberty; The Servant has the Pleaſure to Expect his Wages; And The Son to be his Father's Heir: But The Bleſſed Jeſus knew that He ſhould never be Exempt from his Obedience, to that Labouring Man, and his Eſpouſed Wife, till He went from Them, Into the Service of His ETERNAL FATHER, by Taking The PASTORAL, and PRIESTLY OFFICE, Upon Him, which would

Coſt Him His Life, and not Terminate But by *The Death of The Croſs.*

And, During Thoſe Three Years, In which He Manifeſted Himſelf, by the Publick Diſpenſation of his Doctrine and Miracles, to the World; He Never Aſſum'd the GLORY, of that HIGH CALLING, to Himſelf; But Referr'd and Aſcribed it, All to the Power and Wiſdom of HIS FATHER, who had ſent Him to Inform The Grandees of the World, That, In the Moſt Elevated State, of Life, They Ought not to Forget that They are but DEPENDANT CREATURES, Still; And Acting In COMMISSION as the VICEGERENTS of God, at the Same time that They are ANOINTED to Rule The People: In Short, The Holy Jeſus SUBJECTED Himſef with A PERFECT and ENTIRE SUBMISSION *to the* MOST * UNJUST JUDGES: To A PRESIDENT that was An IDOLATER; And to A CRUEL SANHEDRIM, As to Thoſe POWERS, BARBAROUS and TYRANNICAL as THEY WERE, WHICH GOD, HIS ETERNAL FATHER SET OVER HIM, at that Time; And His Example, is A DEMONSTRATION to us, that, In the True Senſe and Notion of OBEDIENCE, DOMINION IS NOT FOUNDED IN GRACE, And therefore if We are not TRAITORS to this DIVINE *Præcept*; We Muſt not OBJECT AGAINST THE PERSONS WHOM GOD HAS ANOINTED Over Us, *Neither On Account of Their Age, Nor their Capacity, Nor Their Deſert, Nor Their Talents, Nor Even Their Religion, But Only have Our Eye upon that God, and Obey Them for his Sake, who is the Fountain, The Original, and Foundation of All Authority and from whom Alone They Derive Their Commiſſion.*

If

If we Reflect, Seriously, upon This *Model of Perfection*, we may, Yet farther, Obſerve that as God has Qualified the Rigour of The Law, by the Mediation of the Love of Chriſt; So, He has alſo Made the Practice of This Odedience the TOUCH-STONE of *This Charity*: * *If Ye Love me*, Says He, *Keep My Commandments*: † *He That Keepeth Them, He it is that Loveth me* ‖ *He that Loveth me Not, Keepeth not My Sayings*: So that we Cannot Pleaſe God, if we Do not Love Him; And we Don't Love Him if We Don't Obey Him: *Love* and *Obedience*, Produce the Same Effects, and Meet the Same Reward; The Defect, Both of The One, and The Other, is Equally Puniſht; And wants the Same Remedy to Cure it: *Obedience* Grows up Into! *Love*; And Love is PERFECTED by *Obedience*; Love Sanctifies The Soul; Unites it to Almighty God; And Draws down Bleſſings, from Heaven, Upon Itſelf; But Obedience Rivets and Confirms it *There*, And Settles its Poſſeſſion; By Diſobedience Love is Deſtroy'd; And Beſides, Nothing is Purchas'd, By This Means, But Preſent Miſery and Pain, to Soul and Body; On the Contrary Obedience Renews the Life of Deadn'd Love; And Reconciles The Soul to God: In A Word, It Seems, as if All *Chriſtian Wiſdom* were Comprehended In This Vertue: Thus, Although The Tree whoſe Fruit God had forbidden Our Firſt Parent to taſt of, was Called The Tree of Knowlege, This was not that *Adam*, by Eating THAT, ſhould Become More Underſtanding, as the Old Serpent had falſely Suggeſted to Him; But, Perhaps, Becauſe by Denying Himſelf the Taſt of That Fruit, Out of a Prin- III.

* St. John 14. 15.
† v. 21.
‖ *Ibm.* v. 24.

ciple and Spirit of Obedience, He Might Acquire A Higher Degree of Knowledge; For It is No Improvement of LIGHT, to the Soul, to Know how to Commit Sin, But A Lapſe Into the Dark of Ignorance, and Infatuation: He is, Certainly, the Wiſeſt, who Knows The GOOD; and is Inexperienc'd In Evil; And who, having No Other Idea of Sin, but as it is Oppoſite to the *Beautiful Image* of *Vertue* and *Goodneſs*, Like The ANGELS OF GOD, Knows Enough, of it, to Keep Himſelf Out of the Danger of it, and as Much as is Neceſſary for him to Avoid it.

This Gave Occaſion to St. *Auſtin* to Say, that

* *Lib.* de Natura Boni C. 3. & 35.

* *God Could not better Teach us what Obedience is, than by having forbidden Our Firſt Parent, A Thing which Seem'd of Little Conſequence, which Was Not Evil In Itſelf, And which Might Even be Very Good:* From which Inſtance We are Inform'd, that The *Perfection*, of This Vertue Does not Conſiſt Leſs In Not Preſuming to Do what is Forbidden, than In Performing that Which is Commanded; And That The Merit of Vertue is not In its Object, but in Itſelf: The Wiſdom, of the Chriſtian Man, Conſiſts In *Obedience*; And, for This it was, that Holy *David* So Frequently Importun'd God for it:

† Pſ. 143. 10.

† *Teach me*, Says He, *O Lord, to Do thy Will, for Thou art My God!*

‖ Pſ. 274.

‖ *One Thing have I Deſired of The Lord, and I will Still Ask it, that I may Dwell In the Houſe of The Lord, All the Days of my Life*, as A Faithful Servant, who Not Only Knows but Performs his Maſter's Will.

IV. Diſobedience, and REBELLION, Commonly Proceed from Three Corrupted Principles; The firſt is, The Over-value of Our Selves, and

and Our Own Merits, which is Nothing Elſe but an Infatuation and Blindneſs of the Soul, which hindring us from Seeing Our Own Faults, makes us bear That SUPERIORITY and *Prehemi-nence*, Impatiently, In An Other, Of which we think our Selves as worthy: It was This *Preſumption* that Threw down *Lucifer*, Præcipitate, to HELL; And, its Contrary Vertue Raiſed the Bleſſed Virgin to the Dignity of MOTHER OF GOD! It is, on Purpoſe, to Prevent So Great and Dangerous A Sin, that The Saints of God have Arm'd themſelves with This Humble Principle, That They Submitted Themſelves to Every Creature; That They have always been So Ready, and Rather Choſe to do what was pleaſing to Others, than their Own Will; And, to ſtifle the Spirit of Pride within Them, and Bring it Low, That They have Yielded themſelves up to the Will of Thoſe, who had No Right to Command Them: They Inwardly Reflected upon themſelves, as Unworthy to Live among *The Servants of God*; and Look'd upon Every Other Perſon as their Superiour; And, Becauſe This Humbleneſs of Heart, is not obtain'd but with a Great Deal of Pains, They Importun'd it of God with Continual and Fervent Prayers.

The Second Principle of Diſobedience, is when Men Abound In their Own Senſe; which is Ever Attended with OBSTINACY and PRIDE; And is ſo difficult to be Cured, that it is very Rare to ſee any One, In whom The *Divine Light* has diſpell'd thoſe Vapours, that have *Be-miſted* A Soul with ſo Dangerous and Wilful A Conceitedneſs: From Hence it is, That All HÆRESIES and SCHISMS, In the Church, Re-

ceive their Birth; That All Revolutions In the State; And thoſe Troubles and Diſorders in *Religious Communities*, have Their *Riſe*: It is from Hence alſo, that Religious Saints have found themſelves under An Obligation to take The Vow upon them, and ſubmit to the Superiority of One of their Fellow-Chriſtians, perhaps no Better than themſelves; Thereby to Bridle and Put a Check to the Exorbitances of their Own Judgments; And, By this Bitter Antidote, to Flesh And Blood, to Correct and Qualify *So Dangerous a Poyſon.*

Since the Cure of this Diſtemper, muſt Come from Heaven, We muſt alſo Importune it of Almighty God; And, at the ſame Time, Labour to Suppreſs and Bridle This *Spirit of Contradiction*, In us, to keep our frail Reaſoning within its due Bounds; To Diſpiſe thoſe *Inward Endowments* we are ſo apt to Boaſt of; Not to Prefer One's Self to Any Other Perſon; But to Reſt Aſſured that God, In An Extraordinary Manner, Communicates His Light to Thoſe whom He has Appointed to Rule Over Us; That He Aſſiſts Them, by a More Particular Protection; And That it is Infinitely Better, Out of our Love and Reſpect to God, to Submit Our Selves, Our Judgments, and Our Actions, to the *OEconomy* of Our Spiritual And Temporal Governours, than to Expoſe Our Selves to Thoſe Miſeries, to which Our Own Perverſe, Depraved Wills would Lead, and Engage us.

The Third Corruption, that proceeds from this *Poiſon'd Stream*, Conſiſts in the Irregular Affection, and Bent of The Soul, towards Any Thing,

Thing, Be it what it will: For, when the Soul is under ſuch A Bias, we Generally withdraw from our Obedience, Either to Indulge Our Selves, or to Gratify the Object of Our Unlawful Paſſions.

This was the very Occaſion of *Adam*'s Fall; He could not be ſo Extravagant, as to Flatter Himſelf Into an Imagination, that He ſhould Become *Like to God*, or *Not* to Believe the *Threats* and *Sentence* He had Given; But the Fear of Diſpleaſing His Wife, And His Appetite to *Indulge Himſelf*, Conquer'd Him, and made Him to DISOBEY: 'Tis to Cure this Diſtemper alſo, in us, that the Bleſſed Jeſus ſays in the Goſpel, * *If Any Man will Come After me, Let Him Deny Himſelf, and take up His Croſs, and follow me:* ME, who through the Whole Courſe of This Mortal Life, have found Neither PLEASURE, nor REST, But in the *Performance of My Duty.* * St. Mat. 16. 24.

V. Since This Vertue is, as it were, the Panacæa, and Univerſal Remedy to all our Evil; It's no Wonder that the Scripture, and the Holy Fathers Extol it ſo Particularly: It is Neceſſary upon All Occaſions: For, This Viſible World Could not ſubſiſt but by That SUBORDINATION and DEPENDANCE, which God has Eſtabliſht Among the Creatures, that Compoſe it: EMPIRES, and COMMON-WEALTHS, and ARMIES; And All Incorporate Bodies, of Men, whatſoever, Subſiſt, Only, by *Subordination*, which Cannot be Supported but by Submiſſion and Obedience: Wherefore the Royal Prophet having Ask'd the Queſtion: † *Wherewith ſhall A Young Man Reform his Life?* Anſwers it Himſelf Immediately, ‖ *Even by Keeping Himſelf after* † Pſ. 119. 8. ‖ Ibid.

Thy

* Ibid. v. 162. *Thy Comandments:* And, Again, * *I will Rejoyce In Thy Word; as One that hath found Great Spoils:* This whole *Pſalm*, indeed, is full of *Encomiums* upon This Duty, and the Bleſſings which it Procures us.

VI. This Duty of Obedience, may be Conſidered In Reſpect to three Sorts of Perſons; Firſt, In Relation to thoſe, who, by the Circumſtances of their Condition, have the *Command* over others; Next, In Regard to *Such*, as neither Command nor Obey Any Body; And Thirdly, In Reference to thoſe who are under The VOWS of OBEDIENCE: The firſt of Theſe are Expoſed to *Many* and *Great Dangers*; But, Then, They have *Extraordinary Opportunities*, of Doing *Conſiderable Things*, In the World; The Others Walk more Securely; But The Third are Infinitely Happy, when They know The HAPPINESS of THEIR CONDITION; All of 'em Ought to make the LAW and WILL of GOD Their RULE, as the *Compaſs-Needle* is Directed to the *Polar-Star*.

Let Thoſe whom God has *Inveſted* with *Authority*, Make it their Buſineſs, Above All Things, to Imitate that God, In the Management of Their *Rule*, FROM WHOM ALONE They DERIVE Their *Dignity and Power*; By Bringing their Subjects to *Obedience*, by the *Softer* and *more Attractive* Methods of Moderation and Vertue, than, the Rougher Ways, of Severity and Correction: Nothing is more Powerful, than the EXAMPLE of A SUPERIOUR, to Propagate Either GOOD or EVIL, in the World; When A MAGISTRATE Appears Only with The SWORD, and RODS of *Juſtice*, In his Hand; without Mercy and an Inclination to be

be kind; Men will not be Brought to Reſpect Him; And eaſily turn their Duty into a Contempt, Both of the *Perſon*, and the *Obedience*, they owe Him: But were it not ſo, *Clemency* and *Goodneſs* Ought to be ſeen In *Every Appearance of That Derivative Power*, which may ſhew that it is from the *Will of God*, that the Rulers of this World Bear their Sway; and that They are not the PROPRIETORS of the Authority They are ENTRUSTED with.

It is an Unhappy Miſtake, In the *Rulers* of *This World*, to Act as if the Authority, They Bear, were only of THEMSELVES, And Not A STEWARDSHIP, for which They muſt be ACCOUNTABLE to GOD. * *Be Wiſe Now Therefore, O Ye Kings*, ſays *David*, *Be Inſtructed Ye that are Judges In the Earth! Serve the Lord with Fear*, In the Province He has *Plac'd you*; Rejoyce In Him, *But always Let it be* with *Deference* to His *Superiour Power*; And *Trembling* at The Thoughts of Your ACCOUNT TO COME! As You are Raiſed above the *Common Herd*; And Placed, In a *Sphere*, as It were, Between *Heaven* and *Earth*; Look upon Your Selves the Rather, As the more IMMEDIATE Servants of God, than *Superiours to Men*; ‖ *Obey with Submiſſion, Leaſt The Lord ſhould be Exaſperated, And So You Your Selves ſhould Periſh Out of The Ways of Juſtice.* For Thoſe whom God has fixed In A Station above the Reſt, of their *Fellow-Creatures*, unleſs they take Great Care to keep Themſelves within the Bounds of *Humility*, do, Generally, Fall Into That *Vain Miſtake*, of Attributing *All Things* to Themſelves; Expecting to be Applauded In Every Thing They do; Taking

* Pſ. 2. 10. 11.

‖ Ibid. v. 12.

Taking it for *A Blemiſh* upon their *Honour*, if They are not Worſhipt over; And take Offence at every Thing that is not Paid, as a Sacrifice to their own *Worth*, and *Greatneſs*: Therefore they take Ill, the Advices, that are Given them; Looking upon't as an *Impeachment* upon their *Prudence*, and Scorning to follow thoſe *Lights* which themſelves have not kindled; Would they but Conſult the Will and Service of God, and make *That*, and Nothing elſe their Aim In the Miniſtration of their Office, They would Joyfully Liſten to Sound and Wholeſome Advices, from whatſoever Lips they Came; And would, with an Infinitely Greater Pleaſure, Receive the ASSISTANCES than the *Applauſes* of the World.

Thoſe who Live, Out of All Publick Capacity, either of *Governing* or *Dependance*, are not Obnoxious to theſe Defects; And All their Obedience conſiſts In the Obſervation of *God's Holy Will:* But, alaſs! There is ſo little Regard paid to *That*, In this Degenerate Age In which we Live, That a Man, who would make This the Rule of his Conduct, Paſſes for an Extraordinary, Singular, Moroſe, Unſociable, and *Exotick* Spirit; One muſt Live, ſays the World, Like other Men! And Behave, according to the Cuſtom of the Place we Live in: But this Sort of Life, and theſe Cuſtomary Latitudes, Proceed from the * *Wiſdom of the Fleſh, which is Death*; According to the Apoſtle, and *The* † *Wiſdom of the World which is Fooliſhneſs with God:* The Fleſh KILLS us, Becauſe it Extinguiſhes, In us, the *Life* of *Grace*; And the World Deceives us, Becauſe All its Maxims are mere VANITY and ILLUSION: The

* Rom. 3. 13.

† 1 Cor. 3. 19.

The True Wiſdom is, to *Live According to the Law of God*; And * *Obedience*, as the Wiſe-man tells us, *is Better than Sacrifice*; And, He who Submits to God, In All Things, Offers Him A *Continual* and moſt ACCEPTABLE PERFUME, and *Oblation*. * 1 Sam. 15. 22.

VII. The Obedience even of thoſe who have Devoted themſelves to God, is not Complete, if the Soul does not Joyn In the Outward Act of Devotion; And the *Interiour* Judgment does not Attend the *External* Duty; And then, Thoſe who are come up to this Refined Purity and Simplicity of *Reſignation*, to Submit to the OEconomy of the *Spiritual Rector*, ſo as to Receive his Directions and Command, as if it had ACTUALLY *Proceeded* Out of the *Mouth of God Himſelf*, are Arriv'd to a State of Uninterrupted Joy and Peace: But, Thoſe who Behave themſelves after ſuch a Manner, that they muſt be Enjoyn'd Nothing but juſt what ſuits their Humour; Who Preſume to Ask a Reaſon, and to *Cenſure* their *Superiour*; who Canton their Devotions In Quadrature with the World, and not according to the Will of God; Ought not to Flatter Themſelves with the Notion of An ACCEPTABLE and *Implicit Obedience*.

It is, Therefore, A moſt Excellent Advice for all Thoſe who Conſecrate Themſelves to God In a Religious, RECLUSE Life, Not to Reſt Contented In a *Natural Tie*, and Inclination, for the Spiritual Governours; And Not to think it Sufficient to Attempt, THAT NOBLE WORK, by the Strains of Natural and Human *Friendſhip*, which Cannot be Accompliſh'd, under a Leſs or Meaner Attainment than the

SUB-

SUBLIMER MOTIVES of A SPIRITUALIZ'D and DIVINE CHARITY: For, Beſides that No Act of our Obedience Can be SANCTIFIED, that is the Mere Reſult of an Intereſted Friendſhip; This *Falſe Appearance* is the Spring of *A Thouſand Irregularities* In A Community; As it is Grounded Only upon SELF-LOVE, It Generally Produces *Murmurings*, and *Parties*, and *Diviſions*; And By this Means, The *Spirit of the World* is Brought Into The HOUSE OF GOD: Under This Head, therefore, The Submiſſion muſt be Adæquated and *Univerſal*, and Abſolutely Impartial, towards ALL SUPERIORITY, under *Every Qualification*; Should A Subordinate meet with Leſs Favour, his Reſignation would be the more *Pure* and *Sanctified* thereby: Where A Community is Regular, Compoſed of Religious, truly Obedient and Submiſſive; Although the PRINCIPAL ſhould not Govern with an Impartial Hand; yet would They Live In a more Preferable Condition than where the Superiour is A Saint, and the *Fraternity* UNDUTIFUL and DISOBEDIENT: Such is the Subjection and Obedience THE BLESSED JESUS Taught us, when He ſaid unto the Jews, * *The Scribes and Phariſes Sit In* Moſes *Seat*; † *All Therefore whatſoever They bid you obſerve, That obſerve and Do*; *But do not ye after Their Works*; *For They Say and Do not*: And St. *Peter* has Enjoyn'd us, to ‖ *Submit Our Selves to Every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake*; *not only to* VERTUOUS and GENTLE GOVERNOURS, *But Alſo to Thoſe who are Cruel and Tyrannical*; And herein the Sublime, and Perfection of this Vertue Conſiſts; from whence we may Draw Theſe

* St. Mat. 23. 2.
† Ibid. v. 3.
‖ 1 St. Pet. 2. 13.

Theſe Three Inferences, So Important for ALL RELIGIOUS.

The Firſt is, that He who Seeks to Do his Own Will, or Attempts to Render *That*, of His Superiour, *Partial* to His Own, has No Claim Either to the Peace or MERIT of a DEVOTE: In The Next Place, That There Cannot be, In A VOWED STATE, Either Any *Zeale*, that is TRULY SANCTIFIED, Or Any *Prudence*, or *Vertue*, that Will *Bear The Teſt*, Unleſs Every Sacred Principle, They Go upon, has its firſt Foundation, *Laid Strong*, by an ENTIRE Submiſſion Both to The *Rule that is Profeſſed*; And to the AUTHORITY of the SUPERIOUR, In Every Article, without Exception, that is not Contradictory to The Law of God: And, In the Laſt Place, whoever Expects to Taſt THOSE PLEASANT FRUITS, And Find *That Secret* and *Inward Reſt*, the Promiſed Reſult of Our *True Submiſſion* and *Obedience*, to the Divine Will, Muſt Learn The Duty of LOYALTY and OBEDIENCE Alſo to his LAWFUL PRINCE; And, In THIS SENSE, *Obey Man for The Lord's Sake.*

A Divine

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon The Perfect Obedience of Our Bleſſed Saviour.

I. O Sovereign Majeſty! moſt Puiſſant and Almighty God! My Lord! And My Creator! From whence is it, That Thou *Vouchſafeſt* ſuch A Conſtant Intercourſe with thy Miſerable Creature! And, that Thou Canſt not Endure it ſhould Live Under Any Other Rule or Guidance, but thine Own Bleſſed Will! Who am I, In thy Sight, O My God! And How is it, that I Preſume, So much as to Lift up My Eyes towards Thee! To Dive Into thy *Gracious Purpoſes*; And to Receive thy Commands! It were Enough for Me to be Rank'd among the Beaſts of the Field; To Learn from the Worms of the Earth, that Submiſſion and Humility, So Neceſſary to my Condition! To Go to The Ant for My Information, And from the Induſtry of *That People*, to Acquaint My Self with That Care, My Circumſtances Require; or to the Moſt Stupid *Reptiles*, of the Creation, to be Inſtructed In thoſe Laws, of *Reſignation and Obedience*, by which alone I Can Come to Thee! Theſe are the Moſt Proper for My Tuition; Adæquate and Proportion'd to the Degenerate Baſeneſs

Baſeneſs to which I am Reduced! Whence, then, Moſt Bleſſed Lord, Doſt Thou Deign to Suffer me to Look up to Thy Majeſty! To Enquire Into Thy Glory! For This Preſumption Our Firſt Parents fell So Low! And Sacrific'd their Innocence to their Ambition! The Angels of Heaven Burnt their Wings, by Offering at too Near An Approach to thy Brightneſs! Their Pride Induced them to Pry too Near, In Competition with thy Likeneſs; And Thy Jealouſy, which *Burnt like Fire*, Threw Them, PRECIPITATE, INTO HELL! And that TRAITOR, who Betray'd Thee, Loſt Himſelf for Ever, Becauſe He was So Perfidious In Forſaking thy Retinue; And Impatient of Coming *After* Thee! The Dregg of the World, The Earth I Tread on, That's the moſt Proper Place for me to Grovel In; That's my Mother; And It's out of the Earth Thou haſt formed me! This therefore is my *Abode* and my *Proper Dwelling!*

O Infinite Wiſdom! Although Thou haſt Formed me of Clay; Thou haſt made me for Thy Self! Thou haſt Drawn me Out of The Duſt, not that I ſhould (WHOLE) Return to it; But Becauſe Thine Immortal Image ſhould Animate My Soul, which Thou haſt Impriſon'd In This Vegetative Cruſt of Fleſh! It is from *That Breath of Thine*, that Thou haſt made me A LIVING SOUL; That Thou haſt Imparted to me *Underſtanding*, and *Reflexion*, And Given me THAT LIGHT which Diſtinguiſhes me from the mere SENSITIVE and mere ANIMAL Part of The Creation! By which, I Diſcover the Stupendous Inſtances of *Thy* Mercy; and am Capable to Know thy Bleſſed Will! To the End that, by

Endeavouring to Imitate THOSE GLORIES I Behold In THEE, I might Improve My Nature, and Raiſe my Soul to a more Sublime Condition, and *Soar Above my Self*; And not Remain for Ever, Plung'd, and Wallowing in the MUD, from which I am Extracted! Thy Goodneſs Diſpoſes Thee to Lodge In me, and Take up Thy Dwelling In my Heart, as In Thy *Proper Habitation*; And to Sweep it Clean till Thou Canſt find Nothing in it, but what is wholly Reſigned and Grateful to its God! I Adore Thee, My Sovereign Lord! Teach me All that Thou wilt have me Learn! And, O, Keep me in Ignorance of All Things elſe; Be Thou, my Guide to Lead me! Inform me In my Way; And do Thou Regulate my Senſes, and Direct my Powers, my Affections, my Deſires, And all the Faculties of my Soul; And, *Let Thy Will be Done*, within This *Animated Earth*, *As it is In Heaven.*

Thou haſt Model'd my Compoſition by a *Material Body*, and a *Rational Spirit*; And haſt Fixt *Thy Law*, upon them Both, to be *Joynt-Aſſociates*, In Thy Service: The Bleſſed Angels above, are no Leſs Subject to Thy Puiſſance, than the *Little Worm*, that Crawls upon the Ground; nor the Sublunary World, and Inanimate Part of the Creation, in a Leſs Degree, Active In their Station, to the Dictates of Thy Wiſdom, than Thy *Miniſtring Spirits* Before The Throne! O Let the ſame *Harmony* be fixt In me; that my Soul and Body may Rejoice In Thee; And, *All that is within me* make up the Chorus, In *Praiſe* and *Glory*, to Thy Great Name! And ſince it is Thy Will, that My Obedience ſhould be ENTIRE, and with-

without Reſreve; O! Let not this *Clod of Earth*, Ever Weigh, or Sink me down, or Prevent thoſe Purer ſimitations of Thy Holineſs, Thou Expecteſt from me!

Thy *Gracious Goodneſs* has Diſpoſed Thee unto *This*; And from thence Thou haſt Created me, O Lord! And Inform'd my Nature Into ſuch a Perfect Frame and Conſtitution; But Here I muſt Lay open to Thee, O Thou Heavenly Phyſician! All my Wounds, and Sores, and Sickneſs! The Law of Sin is *Quicken'd* In me; And it Grows Powerful, to *Reſiſt Thy Will*! My Faith Convinces me of Thy Doctrine; But when I am to be *Actual*, in Thy Holy Precepts, I find my Self ſo *Frail*, that I Concede and Yield to the more Impetuous Deſires of my Fleſh! The World Calls me out of my Way; And I ſee plainly, that All It has to Offer me, is Nothing elſe but Trifle and Deceit; And yet I am ſo *Infatuated*, as to Follow it! *Vanity* and *Shadows* Glide Before me, with a Thouſand Empty Promiſes and Temptations; And ſtill I am ſo Fooliſh to Depend upon them! Fatal *Pleaſure* Sollicits me, with Its Enchanted Charms; And tho' I am ſenſible how it Carries Poison In its Sting, I Liſten to it, and *Embrace Deſtruction!* The whole Army of my Depraved Inclinations and Senſual Deſires Preſs ſtrong, upon me; And I Conſent to be led along, and Hurried away by them, In the *Road* to *Perdition:* Thou Inviteſt me, O my God, on the other Side, by the Secret Whispers and Attractive Motions of Thy Grace; And the Pure and Refreſhing Light of Thy Truth; And I Refuſe an Ear to Thy Saving Voice! I underſtand the Muſick of Thy Song; II.

And, ſtill, am ſo Bewitcht, as to Diſobey Thy Call! Thou art my Strength; And *Through Thee, I can do All Things*, yet I am Remiſs, and DEAD unto GOOD WORKS! Thou Fortifieſt my Soul with Thy Aſſurances; And yet my Heart Fails me; Thou draweſt meunto Thee, and I Reſiſt Thy Motions; I ſee my Fall; And do not Riſe; the Danger I am In, And yet *I Dwell There.*

How Deplorable is This State! And the Extremity of my Miſery! How it Shrieks for Relief! I am Afraid of Thee, my offended Lord! And Tremble, for my Self! My Habitual Vices, And Thy Holy Law, are Equally A TERROR to me! The Duties Thou Requireſt of me, And the Dictates of my Sinful Soul which I have too Affectionately Purſu'd, to this very Moment, Rent and Tear my Heart; And yet I have not the Power, either to Forſake my Self, or Seek Thee! O Prince of Peace! O Divine Redeemer! Appeaſe this War! Compoſe and Suppreſs this Inteſtine Difference within me, Deliver me from this Torment; Break Theſe Chains, that all my Faculties and Powers may Combine to Offer Unto Thee A Sacrifice of Praiſe; And that I may be Thine Entirely and without Exception: And ſince Thou haſt Given me the Grace to be Senſible of The Danger I am In; Grant me, yet, This One Favour more, That This Light that Thou haſt given me, may not be in vain, that I may not Loſe it; That I may not Relapſe Into my former *Infatuation* and *Folly*, That I may never Fall Into that *Lethargy of Sin*, where Thy Voice *is no longer heard*; Where *Thy Light ſhines not*; Where I ſhall be no more ſenſible of

of the Fatal Poiſon that kills the Soul! By the Privation of It from Thee, O my God, who art its Only and True Life.

How was I to be Pitied, In that Unhappy State! When I Lead my Life, Not In the Way of God; Nor according to the Dictates of His Truth; Nor by Any Rule Preſcribed by His Law; But Riding Poſt after my own Baſe, and and Mongrel Affections; Yielding up to the Cravings of my own Vicious and Profane Deſires, and Shameful Paſſions; And All other Abominations, which Thou didſt ſee, and, In Thy Mercy, Bear withal. O Thou, who art *My Salvation*, and *My Redeemer!* Leave me no More! Thou haſt Healed Me In Baptiſm! Thou haſt Given me Thy Law, that it might be *Day and Night*, The *Meditation of my Heart!* Turn away mine Eyes, therefore, from All the Reſt; *Leſt They ſhould Behold Vanity!* Let my Feet be Swift, *Only*, *in Thy Service*; And my Hands, *Only*, Labour to *Pleaſe Thee!*

But when Will This Come to Paſs; My Heavenly King! Thou All-Sufficient Reſtorer of my Loſſes! Thou Skilful Reformer of All that is Amiſs within me! When will the Bleſſed Time be, that Thou wilt Re-unite, and Recollect Into Thyſelf, That Multiplicity of wild and ſcatter'd Thoughts, that have, hitherto, Diſtracted me; That Thou wilt Draw Me after Thee, by the *Fragrancy* and *Odour* of Thy *Perfumes!* By The *Charms* of Thy *Beauty*; And The Sublime of Thy Heavenly Doctrine! When is it, That Thou wilt Settle In me An Eternal Peace, Between My *Body* and My *Soul*!

* Pſ. 94. 12. For * *Happy is the Man, whom Thou ſhalt have Inſtructed, O Lord! And whom Thou Teacheſt Out of Thy Law*; To ſoften the Miſeries of ſo long a War, till the Grave of the Tranſgreſſor be Prepared; And the Enemy, which is The Body, be Entombed.

III. Vouchſafe, then, Thy Preſence to my Soul, O Thou Mirrour of Eternal Truth! That In Thee It may Behold the Spots and Blemiſhes It has Contracted! But Thou, O Lord! Inceſſantly Reflecteſt Theſe upon it! And by Looking upon Thy Life, Thou ſheweſt me, as In a Glaſs, the Impure and Sullied Images, and the Little Beauty of my own! And I cannot Plead Ignorance In this Matter, Thou art my God! To Thee alone Appertaineth All *Majeſty*, and *Dominion*, whilſt Every Creature is Dependent on Thy Goodneſs! Nevertheleſs, to Confound the Pride within me, Thou doſt *Veil Thy Glory and Greatneſs*; And Condeſcendeſt to Thy Creatures; Thou art Subject to the Work of Thine own Hands; And Submitteſt to The Will of Thoſe, who are Supported by Thy Providence; And, Exiſt by Thy Rule: The Holy Virgin, Becauſe She had The Honour to be Thy Mother, was She the Leſs Thy Creature, upon that Account! All, that The Holy *Virgin-Mother* can lay Claim to, Even to Her very Being, Is it not the Reſult of Thy Goodneſs! From whence then can it be, that Thou ſhouldeſt put Her Under A Conſtraint, to Exert Any Authority over Thy Perſon; And That Thou ſhouldeſt Condeſcend to Dwell under A *Thirty Years* Subjection, of *Filial Duty*, to Her! What Article of Her Advice or Conduct, Couldſt

Couldſt Thou want! Thou, who art the very *Energy and Perfection*, of *All Wiſdom*! Equally The *King of Kings* As of their Subjects.

Let the Beauty of Thy Charms, O Thou Perfect Image of All Brightneſs! Be fixed In my Soul! That, Beholding with my Inward Eyes, Thy Spotleſs Innocency and Divine Graces, I may Learn to Know, and Abhor my own Deformity; To Imitate thy Goodneſs; And to take out All the Stains of my Life, by following Thy Pattern! How can I forbear, whilſt Thy Raviſhing Idea's are before me, to Give My ſelf up Entirely to Thy Will! Or, Think my Self too Good to Submit even to the moſt Unworthy of Thy Creatures! What Hurt would it be to Me, to Throw my Self at the Feet of the Meaneſt Creature upon the Earth, for Thy Sake! It is There, My Saviour! that I ſhould be ſure to meet Thee; And Appear after Thy Manner, who haſt been Deſpis'd and Trampled under Foot, by Sinful Men! But, ſhould I Come to Pride my Self, and to be Puffed up with Vanity and Self-Conceit; Thou art Gone! And I Loſe and Forfeit Thee! For Thou Abhorreſt The *High-Minded!* And *They that are Strangers to the Humble Soul, Are at A Great Diſtance from Their God.*

Thou canſt not but Behold, O my God! How my Heart is Big with Preſumption; And Swells with the Vain Opinion of my *Own Worth!* From whence Ariſes This Dependance of my Own Capacity and Wiſdom; And This Obſtinate Confidence in my own Perverſe Will; which hinders me from Paying due Reverence and Submiſſion to my Superiours, according to the

Indiſpenſable Injunctions of Thy Law! And Conſequently It Robs me of that Inward Peace a d Tranquility, that would ſucceed A *Regular Obedience*; And Carries me Into an Ocean of Turbulent and Flowing Sins: For My Own Wild Reaſon, of it ſelf, muſt needs ſeduce me Into A Thouſand Follies and Wrong Ways; ſometimes, thro' the Appetites of my Corrupt Heart, to Swim in Unwarrantable Pleaſures, and Concupiſcence; Another while, thro' the Impetuous Tide of a Cholerick and Wrathful Conſtitution, and Evil Genius, to Gratify Revenge and do Miſchief! Sometimes prompting me to Plume my Self with the *Falſe Appearances* of my own Vanity, and Self-Conceit; Often Chafing me with Jealouſy, and Envy, and an Unwarrantable Deſire after That which my Neighbour may Poſſeſs or Out-ſhine me In; And, Always, Into a many Deviations, and Croſs-Ways to Sin, through the Corrupt Dictates of A Carnal Mind.

When It comes Into my Mind, to ſerve Thee after my own Way, from that Moment I Begin, Inſtead of doing Acceptable Service, to offend Thee more! Becauſe whilſt I Set up my own *Schiſmatical* Religion, I Deviate from that Charity, on which THY CHURBH SUBSISTS; And, This is ſufficient to Change *my Worſhip* Into AN ABOMINATION; A Guilt that God will not Forgive, But Infatuate me in my Blindneſs, and Smite me with a Wound *Incurable*, and UNTO DEATH; For the More I Rely upon My Self, the Leſs Conſcious am I of what I'm doing; And Conſequently ſink Deeper and Deeper, Into SIN, and PERDITION: Thy Gracious Purpoſe is that I ſhould Enjoy my Soul; And,

by

by A *Religious Obedience*, meet with a Solid Peace, and Tranquility of Life; And, In Oppoſition to it, I am Hurried, by my own Perverſe Will, Into the *Troubled Waters of Anxiety and Diſquiet*: Thou wouldeſt Protect and Shelter me from Harm, by That *Whole Armour of God*; And, I Expoſe my Self Naked, by Throwing it Quite off me, to All the Strokes and Lances of mine Enemies: When I Submit my Self to the *Guidance* and *Direction* of my RIGHTFUL GOVERNOURS, Thou takeſt the Protection and Charge of me, upon Thy Self; And yet I Chooſe Rather, by withdrawing me from my Allegiance, to Charge my Soul with That *Great and Strict Account that I muſt One Day Give!* But if Thou Entreſt Into Judgment with Thy Servant, O Lord, My God, and my Supreme Judge, What will Become of Me! What muſt be the LOTT of My Poor Grovelling Soul, Sunk down In Sin, and Loaded with Its own Miſeries! It was Eaſie for me, to Deceive my Self, But, Alas! It was Impoſſible for *Thine Infinite Wiſdom* to be Impos'd upon! Turn me, then, O Lord, and Convert me; Caſt down my Pride, and Lay it Low, Before the Great and Solemn Day of *Vengeance, and Thy Wrath* ſhall Come!

Thou Knoweſt how dangerous it is for A Man to Live after his own Will; for which Reaſon Thou wouldſt have The *Sons of A Fallen Parent*, Not to Truſt to their own Wiſdom; But Embrace, with Cheerfulneſs, and Submit to Thine: Thou Enlighteneſt Thoſe that Submit to Thy Law; Thou art Preſent to the Lowly; And doſt Reſiſt The Proud Doer; When I am Obedient, out of Love to Thee, I am ſure to Pleaſe Thee;

And

And Thou wilt never Suffer me to be Loſt, ſo Long as I follow the Direction of my Proper Guide, out of A Principle of Imitating my Bleſſed Saviour's Example: But, If I Grow *Refractory*, And ſet up my *Own Will*, againſt *That* of my *Superiour*, How can I Aſſure my Self, that I ſhall ever fulfil Thine!

When I Abound In my own Senſe, I often Scandalize my Neighbour; I Deſpiſe Him, and Applaud and Magnifie my Self: I flatter my Self that I am Wiſe; And Know not what I am! I think my Self upon Sure Grounds; And don't ſee the Præcipices with which I am ſurrounded! And, Thus, I Travel on, Abandon'd to my Self; Deprived of Thy Aſſiſtance, and *Light* to Guide me; And my Soul is Unconcern'd, Amidſt All theſe Circumſtances of Fear and Danger; O my Lord, and my God! Who wouldſt, yet, be my Saviour and Redeemer! Thou Knoweſt that *Preſumption*, and *Vain-Glory*, and *Self-Will*, are the Occaſion of my Ruin! *Tear*, out of my Heart, Theſe Roots of Poyſon! Teach me, and Give me A Deſire to have Recourſe to Thee, for my Cure, ſince Thou art my only Remedy; Thou, Only, Canſt Heal up the Wounds of My Soul!

IV. Teach me, Moſt Divine Redeemer! the Price aud Merits of This Healing Vertue, which is ſo Dear to Thee; which has Attended Thee In all Places; And has diſpoſed Thee to Submit, without Oppoſition, not Only to Thy Holy Mother, and St. *Joſeph*'s Will; But to the *Tyranny* of UNJUST JUDGES, who have Condemned Thee, In Thine Innocence; And to Thoſe Bloody Executioners, who Nail'd Thy *Preci-*

ous

our Body on the Croſs! When They demanded Thy Hands, to Load them with Chains, Thou didſt Stretch 'em forth Unto Them; When They Ordered Thee to Take, or Lay down Thy Coat, Thou didſt Comply; When They would have Thee Sit down, In Order for Their Mocks and Buffets, Thou didſt ſo; When They Gave Thee Gall and Vinegar to Drink, Thou didſt Taſt *That Bitter*; When They Commanded Thee to Extend Thy Precious Body on The Croſs, Thou didſt Obey; And Submit to the *Execrable Will* of Thy *Perſecutors*; as if the *Eternal Father* had ſpoke to Thee by Their Mouths.

Let Thy Vertues Praiſe Thee, Thou God of Heaven and Earth! Let the Saints and Angels of Heaven Glorifie Thy Name! Let All the Powers of My Soul Bleſs Thee! How is it that I am not Tranſported with Love and Admiration at the Sight of Theſe ſo Pure and Tranſcendent Glories, Thou haſt ſhewn me! *Thou Hateſt the Tranſgreſſor Becauſe He is* UNJUST; *And yet it is Thy Will that I ſhould Obey Him:* Thou Condemneſt Injuſtice, And yet *Enjoyneſt* me to *Submit* to it: What can Thy Wiſdom Intend, by This, O moſt Gracious Lord! But to make me underſtand, that *In the* PERSON *of the* MAGISTRATE, *whom Thy Providence has Appointed over me, I ought to have my View, Still, upon Thee.*

How difficult is it for me, O Lord, to Enter Into the Sacred, the Perfect Freedom of Thy Children! Since I Doat ſo much on the Slavery of my own Infatuate, and Diſorder'd Will! If Thou Requireſt Any Hardſhips of Me, what Harm can it be to Me, Since it is by Thy Provi-

Providence They are Appointed to Me! Were I to Behold Thee, with My Eyes, and could be Aſſured that it was from *Thy very Self*, that I had the Honour to Receive Thy Commands; With what *Haſt* and *Readineſs* ſhould I not Fulfil Them! If, then, It be as Certain, as Beyond All Doubt it is, That Thou doſt *Govern All Things, Both in Heaven and Earth*; What ſignifies it by what MEDIUM or REPRESENTATIVE, Thou Communicateſt Thy Will? Whether it be by An ANGEL, or A DEVIL; By A RELIGIOUS PRINCE, or a WICKED TYRANT.

Bleſſed God! Thou Seeſt Into the Bottom of my Heart; And Knoweſt that All The Calm and Quiet of my Soul, is Loſt and Gone, when Once, I Begin to DISTINGUISH, upon The SACRED PERSON of THY VICE GERENT. Lord! Give me Grace To *Honour* and *Revere Him, Not with Regard to his Own Perſonal Worth*, or *Demerit*; But, WHOLLY and ENTIRELY, *As He is Inveſted with Thy Authority*; And, Under that Notion, to Yeild my Self Up Entirely to the Directions of thy Providence! For Then, ſhould Thy Wiſdom Determin my Fate, Under the Subjection of the Moſt Cruel, and the Worſt of Tyrants, His Heart and His Lips Would be, Still, at Thy Diſpoſal; And could not Run Beyond the ALLOTTED LENGTH; nor Sentence me to Any Suffering that Would not End to my Own Profit and Advantage.

Should Thy Providence Place Me Under The Cruelty of An *Unjuſt* and *Wicked Superiour*, whoſe Malice was Pointed Towards me; Alaſs! Thy Goodneſs Would, Still, Behold it! And Turn All his Malicious Hatred to My Advantage! And, Whilſt He Would Damn Himſelf by

by his Sinister Intentions; I should All the while be Working out My Salvation by My Implicit Obedience.

I Prostrate My Self, then, at Thy Feet, O Thou God of my Soul! Lead Me, by what Way Thou Wilt! Govern Me by *Whatever Magistrate*, Thou Thinkest fit! Since Thou Art, Ever; In All Things; And In Every Person; THOU art MY SUPERIOUR; MY GUIDE! And MY KING! I am Always before Thee, and Under Thy Care; And The Object of thy Love: And, BY THESE, *Thou Still Dost Govern me, Let it be through* WHAT INSTRUMENT *It Will.*

Whatsoever Creature is Set Over me, Be He never So Despicable, Still I am Unworthy to Receive Thy Commands, Even Through that Medium; And There Can be No Lawful Governour Whom Thou hast Commission'd, So Bad, But that, In-Justice, I am Bound to Pay My Allegiance to Him: But O Lord, Give Me, In This Case, Such a Principle of Obedience, that May Always have its Byas Towards Thee Alone! That Whilst I am, thus Entirely, Resigned, to the *Municipal Law what Ever I Suffer thereby*, It may be done, Under this Sense, as It is the Medium of Thy Will; For Thou art The Father of Mercies, And Dost Dispose of All Things with Sweetness and a Kind Intention!

Hear Me In This Moment O Thou God of Love! And Receive the Most Humble Suplication, that I Make Unto Thee! What Thou Requirest of me, Above All Things Else, Is that I should Obey Thee; And The First Commandment is, that I should Love Thee! Can I Meet with Any thing Repugant to This Law! V.

No,

No, My God! that's Impoſſible; And I Beſeech Thee, from This Moment, to Accept what I Now Offer up to Thee! And by Thy Gracious Aſſiſtance, to Confirm, and Give Sanction to THE Vow that I am Going, from the Strongeſt Dictates of My Heart, to *Sacrifice Unto Thee.*

I, Miſerable Sinner! Under A Senſe of that Divine Love, by Which Thou haſt Given thy Self Entirely to me, Do Here Make A Publick Profeſſion of Perpetual Obedience to Thy Goodneſs! Accept, Thou Gracious God! Theſe Hands to Labour In thy Service; Theſe Feet to *Run Swiftly* to perform thy Will! This Tongue to Speak thy Praiſe, and Sing *Hoſannah's* to thy Glory! Theſe Eyes, that be from henceforth Lifted up and fix'd for Ever On Thy *Mercy Seat*! And that ſhall Weep a Deluge for my Sins! And A Spring of Joy for thy Bounty, In Forgiving! Lord! Receive The Humble Offering of Every Senſe and Faculty Within Me! With My Whole Body, My Will, My Memory, My Underſtanding, My Deſires, My Sighs, the Intentions, and All the Motions of My Soul! Receive O Lord! All the Remaining Hours; All the Moments; All the Accidents of my Life; My whole Body and My whoſe Soul! Thou haſt Said that we Can Do Nothing without Thee! Nor Live, with Thee, but by Union of Love! O May This Love, then, be the SUPERIOUR and GUIDE, of thy Creature! May it REIGN ABSOLUTE; Steering my Senſes Right; Directing All My Powers, and My Actions; May It Determin upon My Labour, and My Reſt from it; Let it Send Me on its Errant, or Stop My Career, as it Thinks fit; Let its Dominion be without Reſerve; Let

it

it Give me Sorrow for my Potion; Or be *The Comfort of My Soul*; Let it Lay Me Low, upon the Humble Ground; Or Raiſe Me To the Sublime of Heavenly Joy! Let it Conſume All My Imperfections; And Keep My whole Soul Under an Unexceptionable Submiſſion; Let it Diſpel its Diſſipations; And Enlarge its Limits; Exalt its Lowlineſs and Fulfil its Capacity! O Thou Divine Love! Do Thou Poſſeſs me WHOLE! And, then, Do what Thou wilt with me! Drown me In A Sea of Sorrows; Oppreſs, and Load me with Afflictions, and Torment! For I ſhall fear Nothing Whilſt I have Thee with me! And, Since Thou Deſireſt what I Importune Thee for, more than I am Capable to Do my Self, Do Thou So Transform and Change me Into *Thee*, that I May Neither Know, nor be Senſible of my Own Exiſtence, but as It is *Digeſted* Into thy Nature.

O Moſt Pure Virgin! Mother of God! The moſt Humble and Obedient of All Creatures! Conſider thoſe Many fatal and Unhappy Falls Into Which *My Diſobedience*, and Pride have Sunk me! Interceed with My Bleſſed Redeemer, for me! He is THY SON, and THY God! Prevaile Thou, therefore, With Him, to Inſpire me with his Grace, that I may Perform His Holy Will! Ye Bleſſed Angels! Who Reign, In A moſt Perfect Obedience; Plead With THE ONLY MEDIATOUR, for me; That I Alſo, may Enjoy *That* Bleſſed Freedom, In Which You Live! That, Being Looſed from My Self, I may have No Other Will to Gratifie, but That of My *Deareſt Lord*, Whoſe Face You Conſtantly Behold, And Adore, In Your Spiritual Songs, for Ever. *Amen.*

THE

THE

Eleventh Instance

OF THE

SUFFERINGS

OF

Our Blessed Saviour.

CHAP. XI.

Upon The Extreme Poverty of His Condition.

I. SINCE The Holy Evangelist Assures us the Blessed Jesus first Began * *To do*, and then Afterwards *to Teach*; We must Believe, that During the Thirty Years of His Private Life, He Practis'd All those Divine Vertues, Even to Perfection, which, In the Three Last,

*Acts 1.1.

Lastly, when He Discover'd Himself Under A Publick Manifestation; He Compos'd to the World; which may Serve for an Example for All Those, to Follow, who Undertake the Province of Instructing Others.

Bare Words, when They are not Accompany'd with Works, Quickly take off the Impression they make upon the Mind of the Hearers; But they are fix'd In the Remembrance of Almighty God, to the Condemnation of Those Teachers, who do not Practise what They Preach: Whereas when Their Lives Quadrate with Their Doctrine, Their Words Become of Weight, and very Efficacious with Mankind, and of Great Merit Before God. Upon this Account it was, that The Blessed Jesus, altho' He had no Need of the Concurrence of Good Works, and was of Himself, Infinitely Meritorious; Yet He spent a great deal more Time In the Practice of Vertue, than in Teaching it to the World; On Purpose that we should take Notice, How little Esteem *They* deserve, who pretend to Establish the Faith by their Own Authority, and force Mankind into the Belief of it, *Not* by their own Examples, but The Quality of Their Persons. As They Arrogate to Themselves what does Really belong to Almighty God; It Generally happens, by A Just Judgment, that Their Life is, at the same Time, Reprobated of God, and Their Persons Despised of Men; And Although this Contempt, of Them, does not always shew it self In Pulick; The Reputation They have Left is but a weak Support against the *Recoils* and *Misgivings* of their own Conscience.

We may Learn, by All this, The Blessed Sanctification, Doctrine, Example, and Merit of His Life, what we are to Practise All the Days before: And as His Sermons, upon The Mount, is an Abridgement of His Doctrine; And that He Began with an Elogy in Praise of POVERTY, which He Ranked In the first Class of Evangelical Perfection, There is Room to Conclude, That He very much Esteemed The Practice of *This Vertue*.

II. Although He was The King of Glory, And had All the Treasures, Both of Heaven and Earth at His Disposal, He took upon Him A State of *Want* and *Poverty*, for our Sakes: He made Choice of a Poor and humble Shelter, here Below, to be Born in; which was not his Own Neither; And would have One of the poorest Virgins, of the *Line of David*, for His Mother, A Poor Labouring Man for His *Reputed Father*: His first Courtiers were Poor Shepherds; And He was *Presented* In The Temple, and *Redeemed*, by the *Oblation* accepted only from the *Lowest Rank of Men*. During The Three Last Years of his Life, * *He had not where to Lay His Head*, Being In a more Indigent Condition than *The Birds of the Air*, or *the Foxes in the Field*; *who have, the One their Nests, and the Other their Burrows to Retire to, and take their Rest in them*. His Disciples Gathered the Ears of Corn, and Rubb'd them between their Hands, Eating the Common Grain to satisfie their Hunger. One Day nothing could be found but † *five Loaves of Barley, and two Little Fishes In a Basket* to supply them All upon a Barren Wild. The Retinue, He made Choice of, in *Work of His Ministration*, were all Poor Men; And

* St. Mat. 8. 20.

† St. John 6. 9.

And He Commanded Those who were Dispos'd to follow Him, That they should Give All they had to the Poor: He contented Himself with That Homely Apparel which His Holy Mother had Spun for Him; And then, to finish All, He Died Naked upon the Cross, And His Crucified Body was Laid Into a *Borrowed Sepulchre*.

It is Easie to Judge, by the Beginning and Conclusion of His Life, what the Middle Part of it was: But, only Those, who have Experienc'd the Rigours, and sharp Cravings of a Necessitous Condition, Can tell what the Blessed Jesus underwent on this Account. His Diet was very mean, and often Unwholsom; such only as His Parents, together with Himself, could Get by The Labour of Those Hands, which were Oftner Lifted up to God In Prayer, and the sacred Engagements of Devotion, than Employed for the Conveniencies of This Life. In a Word, The *King of the Universal World*, was so Destitute of All Creature-Comfort, That He Reserved not to Himself so much as His own Body, or His Life; But Sacrific'd them Both for our Salvation.

Now, He never would have Set before us, In Himself, such *Great Examples* of This Vertue, were it not for the Foundation and Support of Christian Perfection: For the Main and Principal End of His Doctrine, was to Kindle and Enflame the Soul with Sublime Desires after those Enjoyments for which we were Created. And, In This Refined Purity of Mind, He found the General Cure of those Evil Appetites, which Inchant the World Into a Forgetfulness and Disesteem of Things that are *Eternal*; And, III.

A fond Attachment to those Trifles; that, Like a Shadow, are Transitory, and will Flee away. With These Fugitive Enjoyments The Heart of Man is frequently so Captivated and Taken up, That it can neither Confide nor Hope In any Blessing beyond Them; And that it Declines Those ONLY TREASURES that are Worthy of it, and shuns the very Objects that can make it Happy.

The more Eager it is after those Mistaken Goods whcih Defile it, The Less it's Satisfied; Whilst These Perishable Enjoyments answer to No Other Purpose than to Vitiate its Palate, and take off its Relish and Esteem for that INVISIBLE FRUITION which never shall have an End. And thus it falls from One Degree of Folly to another, Communicating it Self to different Objects, All of 'em, Incapable of Answering to the Cravings of the Soul; And Abandoning The One Thing Necessary; By Uniting which to the Soul, It would find Its Rest, Be Free and Rid of a Thousand Torments; Repair Its Fallen Glory, and, Become Sublimate and Refined, by the Desire of those Supreme Goods, for the Enjoyment of which it was Created! For the Happiness of the Soul Consists In the Unison of its Love; And its Misery, In the Contrarious Multiplicity of its Desires. Now Poverty is a Condition which Sets us Loose from these Inferiour Engagements, and Disposes the Soul to Thirst after *Those Rivers of Pleasure*, which flow from the Fountain of The Divine Love; by putting out of Our Way This World of Trifles.

Therefore

Therefore the Bleſſed Jeſus, who, according to His own Declaration, is Come Into The World to Kindle The Fire of Divine Love, among all The Vertues, which were to be Subſervient to the Execution of His Deſigns, He has Given the firſt Place to This of *Poverty*; And Has Set all Things on Work, if poſſible to perſuade us Into the Choice of it; As Examples, Promiſes, and Exhortations: * *Seek Ye firſt the Kingdom of God, ſays He unto us, And All theſe Things ſhall be Added unto You:* † *Take no Thought for your Life,* ‖ *for your Heavenly Father Knoweth ye have need of theſe Temporal Things:* * *Bleſſed are the Poor In Spirit: For Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven:* St. *Auſtin* Gives to This Vertue, the Name of HUMILITY, *Becauſe it Tears the Root of Pride Out of us, by Deſtroying Preſumption and Vain-Glory, which Proſperity and Affluence do Foſter and Suggeſt to us: Beſides, It is In this Vertue,* as the ſame Holy Father Adds, *that the Firſt Gift of the Holy Ghoſt Conſiſts; that is, The Gift of Filial Fear; Which Keeps the Soul under A Languiſhing Apprehenſion, to ſee It Self Separated from God by Sin, and Preſerves it Pure and Free from All Exorbitant and Exceſſive Affection to the Creature.*

* St. Mat. 6. 33.
† Ibid. v. 25.
‖ Ibid. v. 32.
* St. Mat. 5. 3.

Religious Convents are Founded upon This Vertue; Which, although They may make uſe of different Methods In their Cuſtoms, yet, *All* have the ſame End and Purpoſe, namely, to Abſtract the Heart from Earthly Affections, which might take the Place of *Divine Love.* But, amongſt Theſe Orders, The Church Prefers Thoſe which Profeſs the Strickteſt Poverty: Becauſe She Judges Them the *Richeſt in the*

Love of God, and the most Proper to Preserve it.

The *Model of All Perfection*, In whom, All the *Heavenly Treasures*, we either can Possess or Desire, are Included; Would LIVE and DIE, Under the *Straitest Circumstances of Poverty, In this World*; Least we might have been dazled with the Brightness of His Glory, Had He Appeared In His Grandeur; And that we might see Nothing In Him, But Himself, as He Sought Nothing In Us but *Our Hearts*: For Properly Speaking, Poverty of Spirit, is An Abstraction of The Mind from the Mean and Despicable Trifles of the World, In Order to Enrich it with those Treasures which Never can be sufficiently Esteemed.

The Saints Therefore who were Enlighten'd by The Holy Ghost, judged themselves Poor In the Midst of their Greatest Worldly Possessions; But Rich under the most Pressing Instances of Indigence and Necessity: Because They Found, In Themselves, that Earthly Riches, Even put All together, Cannot fill the Capacious Largeness of the Soul; And, that the Spiritual Treasures He Enjoys In Almighty God, are the Only Enjoyments that can Satisfy the Heart of Man; And, In this Sense, EVANGELICAL POVERTY Ought Rather to be Call'd *Abundance* than *Indigence*, Had not Our Blessed Saviour Spoken after the Common Manner of Men, to be Understood by Them.

It is a Common Observation, that No Man Setts a Greater Value upon his Performances, than He that is Capable of Doing Little; And, on the Contrary, He that Can do most is Seldom Satisfied

Satisfied with what He Does; The Liberal Generous Man Never thinks he has Dispens'd Enough; And The Hungry Miser Grudges at the Smallest Pittance as too Much to Spare. The Luxuriant Gormandizing Glutton, Looks upon His Abstinence from One Days Meal, as the Fortitude and Self Denial of an Heroe: And It is A Holocaust to the Passionate and Revengeful Soul, who Imagins He has Offer'd A Great Sacrifice, In not Shedding the Blood of his fellow Creature, to Gratifie his Fury. Thus, He that is, In Truth, Endowed with this Vertue of being *Poor in Spirit*, Deems Himself A Prodigal if He does but Allow the Least Thing to his own Necessitys; The Patient Soul Seems to it Self as In the Paroxysm of Rage, if He is but Sensible of the Greatest Wrongs; The Temperate, Man thinks Himself Guilty, as a Voracious Glutton, if a few Days pass him without Fasting; And It is the Same Thing In All Other Respects, The Disposition of Our Hearts Being Always Influential Towards the Bent and Bias of our Judgments.

Therefore Those, whose Souls are Glu'd to The World, Admire and Seem Amaz'd at the Avowed Poverty of St. *Francis*; Whereby They, who have Tasted The Spiritual, and Delicious Repasts of this Sacred Vow, Cannot but Wonder that the Holy Devotee had not straitned The Holy Order Under A Greater Severity: Poverty is Lookt upon as a Miserable State by those whose Hearts are Rivetted to This World; But when The Love of God Dissolves The Soul, It is, then, Under the poorest Condition, Ravish'd with Spiritual Enjoyments that Cannot be Expresst.

V. There are Two Sorts of Poor In The Church; The First, amidst the Plenty of This World have their Hearts Loose and Disengaged from their Possessions: The Others Renounce Them for Ever *that They May Serve God with more Uninterrupted Liberty.* God Has Permitted Perfect Men to be found amongst Those of The First Sort; That the *Religious*, on One Side, Might not Over-Value Themselves on Account of Their Vowed Poverty; And The Rich of the World, on the other Hand, should be Inexcusable if they Prostitute these Blessings to Evil and Wicked Purposes. Thus *Abraham* In the Midst of All his Greatness was A Perfect Model of Obedience; *Susanna* A Rare Example of Chastity, In the State of Marriage; And *Job* Discovered A Soul, within him, free and Disengag'd, Under all the Temptations of his Larger Estate, and Plenteous Demesnes.

Those whom God has Bless'd with Affluence and Plenty, and Yet Aspire after This Grace of Being Poor In Spirit, Ought to be Very Cautious of Two Extremes, that is to Say, *Prodigality*, and *Avarice*; Which Last is Yet More Odious than the Other: For The Prodigal Man Does Good to Many a Soul; But as for The Stingy Niggard, He Benefits None, No, not Even Himself. The first takes a Pleasure to Scatter his Estate about; But The Other Grasps All that He Can Come at; And They are The Words of The Blessed Jesus, That * *It is Better to Give than to Receive:* The Prodigal Man, has but very Little Concern about the Mony that He Squanders; And tho' He prostitutes it to Gratifie his Other Vices, the Griping Wretch is no More Exempt, or at Least Does not

* Acts 20. 35.

not forbear to Commit the Same Iniquity, out of any Principle of Vertue; But for Fear of Repentce: The Prodigal is Nearer to *The Kingdom of God*, than the Hungry Muckworm; And is Under a Capacity to Heal Himself by taking away the *Instrument*, and *Supply* to his Debaucherys; But, Like the Grave, The Other is Still Craving, And by his Insatiable Eagerness, after the Things of this World, He is Under an Almost INCURABLE Distemper, and Impossibility of Conversion: The Prodigal Son, after He had felt the Smart, and the Disgraces Consequent to his Lavish Folly, Returned to his Fathers House; whilst the Rich Glutton, Insensible to the Miseries of a Distressed *Lazarus*, *Lift up his Eyes In Hell!*

They who by Religious Vow, have Renounc'd and bid Adieu, for Ever, to This world And its Accommodations, Ought to Remember that The POOR JESUS is *Their Treasure*; And that All Their Riches Consist *In His Poverty*: But, In Regard to Those, who Have Offered their All, without Reserve, In the Simplicity and Integrity of their Heart, He is, *to Them* that † *Mysterious Book Written Within and on the Backside*, In which, This Excellent Truth is Read; But This is A Book Shutt, and Seal'd with Seaven Seals, which Neither Can be Read, nor Opened by Those whose Sacrifice is Imperfect, and who Commit A Theft upon the Sacrifice. From Hence it is, that they are As Much Concern'd for A Trifle, which is Taken from Them, or Refus'd Them, as A Miser would be at the Loss of A Sum, of Mony; Being So Much at a Distance from the True Spirit of This Duty, as they are Less faithful to their

† Rev. 5. 1.

Vow

Vow In the Smalleſt Meaſure. If A Religious be not A Perſon Given up to Prayer, He Cannot be Truly Poor In Spirit: It is Prayer that Abſtracts and Separates Him from The World; And Ratifies His Soul Into an Eſſence of Divine Love: And Although He May have Quieted his Own Conſcience In Diſclaiming All Propriety and Renouncing All, In This World; Yet He will not Arrive at the Perfection of *Evangelical Poverty*, and Self Denial, Nor Taſt Thoſe Sweets, but by An Holy Intercourſe and Communication with God; Which Deſtroys and Conſumes All Earthly Affections.

* 1 Cor. 3. 12. Thoſe that are Truly Poor In Spirit * *Build In Gold, In Silver, and Precious Stones*, According to the Expreſſion of St. *Paul*; Whilſt the Others Only *Build with Straw and Stubble!* Both

† 1 Cor. 3. 15. of them May be Saved; But the Latter † *ſo as by Fire*; As thoſe who Cannot Save Themſelves from being Conſumed, but by paſſing through the Middle of The Flames: For, The Fire Will Try All Our Works, And thoſe that are of a Terreſtrial Quality, that are Straw and Stubble, 'tis Neceſſary that They ſhould be Conſumed; Either In the Flames of the Divine Love, or by the Unquenchable Brimſtone of

* 1 Cor. 7. 31. his Juſtice. * *The Faſhion of this World Paſſeth away!* Happy is The Man that fixes his Affections on what is Solid and has a Good Foundation, And Places his Heart where his True Treaſure is.

A Divine

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon The Extreme Poverty of Our Bleſſed Saviour.

O THOU Immenſe Treaſure of Celeſtial Riches! Thou Ever-Flowing Fountain, and Foundation of All Joy and Pleaſure! The Everlaſting Happineſs of Every Soul, that Aſpires after Thee! O Sovereign Jeſus! My God, My Redeemer, My King! My Only Bliſs! And All My Glory! With what Glowing Sentiments is My Heart Affected, and My very Soul, by the Grace of Thy Divine Illumination! O How is it Raviſht with the Senſe of thoſe Gracious Purpoſes of Thine, which are the Natural Reſult of Thine Eternal Love! Lord! Do Thou, that canſt do All Things, Digeſt this My Knowledge Into Love; And, Grant, that My Will being perfectly Transformed Into Thine, I may Live In Thee; And Thou Take up Thy Abode, and Dwell In Me for Ever! Eternal Praiſe and Adoration be Aſcrib'd unto Thee! That Thou Haſt the *Good-Will to Men*, to Communicate and Impart Thy Self, and Become My Treaſure and My Felicity! In Thee My Soul Poſſeſſes All that can be called Good! And, *That*, upon ſo Solid a Foundation, that No

No Malicious Enemy can Rob Me of it. For Thou art so very High, that Evil cannot Approach, or Come Nigh Thy Dwelling-Place: So very Powerful and Omnipotent, that Nothing can be too Difficult for Thee to Accomplish! And such a WELL of LIFE, that All Pain and Misery must be Washt away by Thy *Fountain of Living Waters*! The Joys Thou hast in Store, are ten Thousand Times Greater than My Heart can hold, or even be able to Conceive! Of Thy Bounty Thou hast Proposed to Recompence my Labours with a *Greater Weight of Glory* than I Can Wish! And Thy Greatness is Infinitely above All that the very Soul can Comprehend.

Thou art such In every Respect wherein 'tis possible for the Blessed to Receive any Addition to their Felicity, that *Out of Thee* there can be Nothing else but what is Misery and Sorrow: And since the Case is so, That all True Happiness is Comprehended In Thee, and All else is Sin and Woe, Whether should I Go to Seek My Happiness, But In Thee, My God! In whom Alone It is to be found! Be it so, Gracious Lord! I Accept the Inexpressible, Unparallell'd Bounty! Teach me, then, to Pant and Breathe after it; Instruct My Heart How to Raise the Flame, and be Enamour'd of it; To Preserve it safe within the Centre of My Soul! Take away from *That*, all Earthly Objects! Let them all Disgust and Flatten to My Senses; Every Thing that Leads Me not to Thy Throne where My God Liveth! Deliver My Soul from the Temptation of Those Vanities and Trifles that would Baffle it of its Real Treasure! Do Thou, O Lord, Fill This Large, Capacious Soul

Soul To Bliss: which Thou hast Created Only for The Enjoyment of Thy Self, that Thou Mayst Dwell There In the Purity of Thine own Nature; That I may Not have a Wish but what Sigh's after its God! That I may Take Nothing to my Bosom but what proceeds Out of Thy Rivers of Pleasure, who art my whole Felicity; And, *That*, Such a One as is Entirely my Own, The Greatest my Heart Can Wish, or Contain; And A Treasure that I Cannot Lose, or Ever be Deprived of. Thou art A *Treasure*, as Thou art The *Spring* from Whence *All Happiness* is Derived: Thou art *My* Treasure, as Thy Ineffable Goodness and Bounty Refuses me Nothing that Thou Art; But dost Impart and Communicate thy Self Unto me! Thou Art The Greatest Riches; Because Thou Art *Heaven*; And Happiness is Thy Essence! And Thou Art A *Supreame* Good, that is Infallible and Certain, Because Nothing Can Bereave me of Thee, without my Own Consent, or against my Will.

Let my Whole Soul, then, take its Bias Towards Thee My God! Let All those Inward faculty's and Powers be Employ'd and Busy In thy Service; that All that's Spiritual Within me May be Swallow'd up and Lost In Thee! For 'tis Impossible for me Ever to Wish So Great A Good; or Even to Meet with any thing that is truly So without Thee! Radicate Thy Love within me, O My God! Let it be Rooted Deep, that The Weight of the Flesh may Never Shake it, Nor The Torrent of the World Gull and Wash it up; Nor no Tempest pluck and tear it from My Heart: For, Since Thou Art my Treasure, I have nothing more

to

II. It is, Doubtleſs, to Bring me to Thy Kingdom, that thou didſt Give up All In This World. Thy Intention was that, If I Aſpired to Thine, I ſhould mind Nothing Elſe, but that Goodneſs to which I Owe All that I am, and Every Particle of my Heart is Due: There is Nothing Either In Heaven, or On Earth but what is Thine: The whole Creation is Directed and Govern'd by Thy Decrees: It is A Dominion which Thou Canſt Not Transfer. Although in this State of Mortality, Thou hadſt Engaged The whole Creation in thy Service, Thy Almighty Power would not have been Inſtructed thereby! And That Mighty Inſtance of thy Power Would have Tempted me, to Deſire the Goods of this World. Thou Wouldſt not make uſe of Them thy Self Although They Were Thine Own Property, Out of Tenderneſs to my Blindneſs and Incapacity: But Thou waſt Born Poor, And Livedſt In a Mean Condition, and So Thou didſt make thine Exit Out of The World; And didſt not only Deny, a place of Reſt, to thy Weary Head, during thy Life, But Even A Grave to Lodge thy Crucified Body In after Thou Waſt Dead. When Thou waſt Deſtitute of Proviſion, Thou didſt Submit to the Cravings of Hunger; If Thou hadſt Any Thing Beſtow'd upon thee, Thou Wert Thankful as A Common Beggar; If The Cruell World Refuſed Thee a Small Pittance of what was thine Own, Thou didſt not Repine: They Diſrob'd Thee of thy Veſtments, on Mount *Calvary*, which Became thy Crucifiers Plunder: upon The Croſs They

[illegible] Abandon'd! While thoſe fowl Cinders [illegible] Thy Languiſhing Soul did Groan in the Extremity of Torments; And there Thou didſt yield [illegible] Chaſt with an Entire Reſignation and [illegible] Reſolution.

O Jeſus! Poor and Abandon'd! Is it Poſſible that Thou ſhouldſt want Every Kind of Comfort; And yet that All Things ſhould be Thine! That thoſe Wants ſhould not Prevent, or Hinder Me from finding every Thing the Soul can deſire or wiſh for In Thee! Thou Setteſt Thy Humanity before Me, Poor and Naked, and Quite Deſtitute; And yet Full of all the Treaſures of Thy Divinity! I Behold the God in Thee, as well as the Creature; Both the *Divine* and *Human Nature*; And, in this ſo Pure and Hypoſtatick Union, Thou ſheweſt Me with what a ſimple Purity I Ought to tender the Fervency of My Soul unto Thee; And Devote My Heart unto Thee Clean and without any Mixture of the World's Corrupt Alloy! Let Me then Adore Thee, for Thy Condeſcenſion in Stooping down So Low, and giving up Thy Self to Want and Poverty, who art *A Treaſure of Eternal Riches!* Let me Adore Thine Infinite VViſdom, in the Deſigns of Thy Providence herein, on the Account of My Soul.

III. Take Pity on Me, O Lord! And Grant Thy Poor Deſtitute Creature, the Grace to Poſſeſs Himſelf Only of Thee; And to yield Himſelf up Wholly and Entirely Thine! But Alaſs! Miſerable Sinner that I am! I let Thee Go! I Hunt after That which Thou doſt Flee from! I Cringe and Debaſe My Soul with that which Thou Diſdaineſt! I haſten to Purſue thoſe Beg-

Beggarly Enjoyments with an Insatiable Appetite and Hunger! And am so Infatuated as to imagine I shall find what will satisfie My Soul *Out of Thee!* What Profit can there be in the Enjoyments of the Flesh, which Thou hast thrown Behind Thee! Or in the Favour of the World, which Thou hast Despised! The Transitory and Perishing Riches which Thou hast Renounced! And the Pleasures of the World in which Thou hast Deny'd Thy Self! Thou, O Lord, to whom All Things are due! And whom Nothing can withstand; Thou hast Preferr'd the Want of all these Things with their Abundance, Only out of Thy Love to Me; Me, who think my Self Miserable, because I do not Enjoy them; And should count my Self very fortunate to Possess them, without Thee! With what Infatuation, with what Misery do these Fugitive Enjoyments defile and Corrupt my Soul! And yet I still desire them! They Rob me of Thy Love; They Deprive me of my ALL, of THEE, my God, And my Everlasting Fruition; And yet still I think my self Rich when I can Come at them; and Destitute without them!

That which prevents the Uniting of my Soul to Thee, and Valuing Thy Richness as I ought, is the yielding up my Inclinations, and prizing all those Low and Beggarly Enjoyments which Thou hast deem'd too Base, and Unworthy of Thee! But there is not any of these Trifles that I Love so, to be met in Thee; How then is it possible I should find Thee in them; O Infinite Goodness! that *wouldest Not the Death of A Sinner, But his Conversion, And his Life*; It is not that I can fail of Any thing In Thee, that Thou

Thou didſt take the State of Poverty upon Thy Self; But to Teach me that Thou Thy Self Art *Sufficient* for me; And that I can be Rich In Thee Alone! Let Thy Poverty therefore O! work the Gracious Purpoſes of thy Goodneſs to Effect upon me.

Thou Seeſt, O My God! That what I poſſeſs of This World with ſo much Delight, or Purſue with ſo much Eagerneſs and Deſire, takes up my whole Soul; Abſtract All my Thoughts, And Deprive me of my Reſt: So Long as I am Incumbred with theſe Dangerous Amuſements, I forget *Him* that *Made Me!* I can, no Longer Lift up my Soul to Him for what I want; No Longer *Worſhip Him In Spirit and In Truth:* I think no more *Then*, how much I am Indebted to Thy Goodneſs! But I Reject theſe Gracious Overtures! And what I cannot Expreſs without the Utmoſt Confuſion, before Thee, my moſt Merciful Saviour; If any feeble Deſire moves me towards Thee, prompting me to Haſten to thy Mercy-Seat, I find my Self ſo Loaded and Over-Burthened with my Miſery, and ſo ſtain'd with Guilt, that I have not the Power, I dare not ſo much as Lift up Eyes towards Heaven! Any Trifle Engages me; Every Childiſh Gugaw, and Vitious Deſire, like the Whimſies of a ſick Perſon, takes Poſſeſſion of Me! The Leaſt Pleaſure drags me after it, though there be Nothing Solid in it! And I am ſure to find a Fatal Poyſon therein, and A Philtre which the *Grand Adverſary* makes uſe of, to withdraw my Soul from Thee: But the Heighth of my Misfortune is, that I do not ſee the Wretched Condition I am In; And am not Senſible of the Temptations, and

Dangers to which I Expoſe my ſelf Hereby, But when I am fallen Into the Pit.

Thou Knoweſt all my Miſeries, O Lord! And Thou alone canſt Heal them, And Relieve me! O my Dear Redeemer! who art, Thy Self, Poor, and Stript of All! Take Pity on my Diſtreſs! Alas! This is not what Thou art pleaſed with, or what thou Requireſt of me! 'Tis, on the Contrary, what Thou In Truth doſt Hate, And the Cauſe of my Perdition! For I am ſenſible how very far I am, upon this Account, from that Poverty of Spirit, which Sanctifies Thy Servants; But Wretched as I am, I caſt my Self at thy Feet; O Break my Bonds aſunder! Unbind the Cords that faſten me to the Earth; Inſpire me with A Sacred Abhorrence of Every Thing that Thou deſpiſeſt In this Life, And Recal and Reunite All my Affections and Deſires In Thee Alone; All my Thoughts and Inclinations, that they may Lodge and Centre In Thee.

IV. O Light Divine! O moſt Exalted Glory! Thou only Treaſure of my Soul! Hear what it has to ſay; And Anſwer it, in the ſoft Whiſpers of thy ſtill Voice! O ſpeak to me Thou *Eternal Word*! and Let me ask Nothing but what thou wouldſt have me to deſire of Thee! But ſince this Grace of Poverty is ſo Dear unto Thee, that Nothing of the Acquiſitions of this World could touch thy Affections, wilt Thou not alſo Reject the frail and weak Inclinations of this Heart of mine, that has been ſo long Rivitted and Stak'd down to the Earth! My Heart, Blind and Infatuate as it is, anſwers that Thou wilt not, which it would not have the Power to do, but by the Impulſe of Thy Holy

Holy Spirit: Yea, moſt Gracious Redeemer! It is for my Sake only, that Thou haſt Deſpoil'd Thy Self of All the Conveniencies of this Life; And Thou wouldſt not have paſt Thy Life in ſuch A poor Condition, But that My Soul ſhould take up that Room thou haſt made for it, In Thy Self, by Quitting all Secular Things upon this Account! All the Nouriſhment Thou Requiredſt, was to Feed upon My Heart; This was All thy Cloathing and thy Place of Reſt; With which Thou wouldſt be better Satisfied than with All the Enjoyments of the Creation! In a Word, Thou art Poor, that the moſt Deſtitute and Diſtreſſed Soul might be Comforted with the Hope of His Share In Thee! Come then, Thou Poor, but yet *Divine and moſt Precious Saviour*! Enter In, that Thou mayſt Lodge In this diſtreſſed Soul! And, Say no More that *Thou haſt not where to Lay Thy Head!* For I am always Ready to Receive Thee!

Remember, O Bleſſed Lord! that when Thou didſt Appear upon Earth under Thy moſt Deſtitute Condition, A Publican Invited Thee to Eat with Sinners, who were Like me moſt Naked and Deſtitute of Thy Riches; But Thou didſt Vouchſafe to Aſſociate with Them; And didſt Diſpiſe the Murmurings of Thoſe Proud Worldlings who Reviled Thee upon this Account! Remember how the ſinful *Zacheus* having a Deſire to ſee Thy Sacred Perſon, Thou didſt Invite Thy Self to Lodge with Him, to Gratifie his Curioſity, and didſt Carry Thy Bleſſing Along with Thee! Thou doſt not Forget, How ſhe that Had been ſo Looſe, and ſuch a Wanton Woman, came to ſearch after Thee in the Houſe of a Sinner, and Return'd from

thence a Sanctified Soul! And afterwards Thou didſt Vouchſafe her a Viſit at her own Home! Thus Thou who denyeſt Thy ſelf every Thing that this World Affords, Inviteſt *All Thoſe that are Weary and Heavy Laden, to Come unto Thee*, with an Aſſurance that *Thou wilt Give them Reſt:* Content to be Deprived of All the Reſt, Thou Requireſt Nothing but the Heart! Who then ſhall Hinder me, O Lord, from Partaking of thoſe Graces that Flow from Thee!

It is True, I am not Worthy that Thou ſhouldeſt Enter Into My Soul! But ſince my Wretchedneſs has not Prevented Thee from Inviting me, It ought not to Hinder me from following Thee! And when Thou ſaidſt that, * *Thou ſhouldeſt be Lifted up from the Earth, and then Thou wouldeſt draw All after Thee*, I was not Excepted In that Thy *Meritorious Work* upon the Croſs! Draw me then to Thee, O my God! I am not leſs Thine than *Matthew*, or *Zacheus*, or *Magdalene!* But, If I am yet more Blind and Miſerable than They were; The Exceſs of my more Deplorable Condition, is ſtill a farther Argument for Thy Compaſſion! Remember, Gracious Lord! that Thou haſt not Deſpiſed the Pooreſt Creature! Thy Holy Mother was Under the Greateſt Straits, and Brought Thee forth in a Stable; The Poor and Simple Shepherds were Thy Courtiers to Attend Thee In Thy Manger; Thou didſt make Choice of Mean, Illiterate Men for Thy Diſciples: Thou haſt Invited Poor Sinners to Thy Comforts; with ſuch as Theſe Thou didſt Spend Thy Life; And Gaſp out Thy Breath Between two of Them! There is no Condition of Poverty which

* St. John 12. 32.

which Thou haſt not Delighted in, either for Our Trial, Or to Heal us, Or Enrich us by it; So that I ſhall not be Excluded! I am miſerable enough to Betake my Self to Thee, Moſt Divine Saviour! And I have a juſt Title to Come Into Thy Preſence! O do Thou, therefore, Receive me, My God! Into the Number of the moſt miſerable Objects of Thy Charity; Thou ſhalt find Room In my Heart for thee to ſhed thy Treaſures In; or, at Leaſt to Exerciſe thy Mercy and Compaſſion.

When I look upon thy Poverty, I cannot Expreſs the Sentiments of my Heart, But yet I cannot Leave Thee! There is a Greatneſs and A Charm In thy Poverty, that Raviſhes my Soul; And I Adore it as much as my Weakneſs will permit me: Lord! Kindle In my Heart A Flame towards Thee, whoſe Strength may Equal the Miſery of this thy Suffering! All thoſe Fugitive Enjoyments which Thou haſt deny'd thy ſelf In This World, do Really Leſſen and Impoveriſh the Soul that is too Exceſſively Addicted to them; Whereas, Thou Heapeſt upon Thoſe who deſpiſe and ſit Looſe to Them, the *True Riches*, and ſuch as are of a moſt Solid and Subſtantial Nature; † *Thou Wilt not forget the Soul of The Poor*, as the Prophet tells us, *They are Enlightned with Thy Brightneſs*! Repleniſht with thy Wiſdom, and Guided by Thy Spirit! No Trouble moleſts Them! But They Enjoy an Uninterrupted Calm, and Life of Peace and Quiet; And although They Live In a Miſerable World, Their Converſation is In Heaven! whilſt Impriſon'd In a Body of Clay and Corruption, They Lead the Life of Seraphim and the Angels of God! The Poor Taſt

V.

* Pſ. 74. 19.

thoſe Sweets, which Worldly Minded Men In Vain Purſue but Never find! Theſe, having Nothing, Poſſeſs Every Thing; Amidſt the Miſeries of this Painful Life, They Enjoy a Sacred and Perfect Freedom, Always Raiſed above the World, And Above Themſelves! They Appear Little In the Eyes of Men! But they are of Great Eſteem, and very Dear to Thee! They value not what the World Prizes, by which They are Deſpiſed! But They Live with Thee; And are ſatisfied with the Proviſion of Thy Holy Table; And after that Delicious Entertainment, All the Luxurioufneſs of the World is Taſteleſs and Inſipid to Them.

When will that happy Moment Come, O Thou, who art my God, and my All! When Abſtracted far from the World's Senſual Enjoyments, Content in Thee Alone, and Swimming in the Ocean of Thy Bliſs, the Tranſports of Love, and the utmoſt Reſentments of Gratitude, I ſhall Break out and ſay, *O My Father! My Treaſure! My Reſt! My Deareſt Happineſs!* It's true, O Lord! that Thou art always All This! But then I can have no Feeling of theſe Unutterable Tranſports, but when thou wilt, that is, when Thou Toucheſt My Soul with thy Secret Illapſes of Thy Spirit; when Thou Diſpelleſt thoſe Clouds of Darkneſs in me, with A Ray of Thy Brightneſs; When Thou Refineſt all the Droſs, all that is Baſe and Earthly in me by the Fire of Thy Love; And doſt Digeſt and Reunite the whole Multiplicity of my Deſires Into Thine Own Purity and Brightneſs! How very different do I find my Heart then! Of what a Refined Extract from its

its own Groſs Nature! When, In the Fulneſs of Thy Knowledge, and Thy Love, it vents its Inward Joys, and cries, My God! my Riches! my Strength! My Delight! Then it Feaſts on Thy Sweets as its Solid and Proper Food! And All the World beſides is Froth and Nothing! Away, Be Gone far from me, All ye Sordid Trifles, that are Dirt and Earth! Farewel Vain World, and all thy fading Glories! Let me Embrace My Poor, Abject, Deſpiſed Jeſus! O My Jeſus! O My Love! O My Life! O My All!

VI. * *In Thee*, Moſt Divine Saviour! *I put All my Truſt; I ſhall never be Confounded!* All my Fears Vaniſh at this Sight! I ſhall never have Reaſon to be aſhamed, Nor never Repent of having Loved Thee! Or that I have Believed In Thee, or even Quitted and Forſaken All the World for Thy Sake and to follow Thee! When every Creature Sets It Self up againſt me, *My Heart ſhall not fail Me, for Thou art my Defence*; Whilſt I am Armed with Thy Poverty, I ſhall be Invulnerable to the Darts of mine Enemies; And They will not Know In which Part to Strike me: Open Thine Ear, O Lord, unto the Voice of my Diſtreſs; Vouchſafe Thine Ear to the Breathings of a Soul that Pants after Thee! Haſten to my Aſſiſtance againſt Thoſe that would Tear me from Thee! I Apply to Thee; Chooſing Thee for my Treaſure and my Only Good! Deſtroy Then thoſe who are Labouring to Extinguiſh this Light, that They may Rob me of my Treaſure by the Help of that Ignorance and Darkneſs that is In me! Be Thou therefore My Help, My Protector, My Refuge, and My Salvation. * Pſ. 25. 2.

When Thou Commandeſt me to follow Thee, and to Renounce the World for Thy Sake, Thou knoweſt my Frailty; And therefore thou Engageſt thy Self at the ſame time to Become my Strength, and Regardeſt not the Merit of my Weak Endeavours, But the Greatneſs of thy own Mercy: How Secure am I, Moſt Gracious Lord! under the Shadow of Thy Wings! How Tranquil and Quiet In Thy Arms! How Sweetly do I Repoſe my Self upon Thy Boſom! Thou Deliverеſt me from the Snares mine Enemies have Planted to Surprize and Trepan me! Thou takeſt the Care upon Thee to Defend me from them, that I may not be ſhaken either by the Sharpneſs of Neceſſity that preſſes hard upon me, nor by my own Infirmity, that Weakens and Diſables me; nor by the Perſecutions of the World, nor the Temptations of that Evil One: It is Thy Pleaſure, O Lord! And it is Juſt, that whilſt I Live In Thy Fear and Love, I ſhould defy all Evil! And whilſt I follow thy Example, ſhould be afraid of Nothing; ſince Thou Giveſt me the Grace to do as Thou Commandeſt me! And art Almighty to Protect me.

I Caſt my Self therefore, O My Lord! and my God! with All my Miſeries, my Sins, my Frailty, and thoſe Good Inclinations with which Thou Inſpireſt me, Into the Arms of thy Fatherly Compaſſion. * *Into Thy Hands I Commend my Spirit!* Thoſe Hands which have made me after thine own Image! Lord! do Thou Reform and make it a New Creature thro' Thy Wiſdom and Thy Truth! And Grant that I may thereby diſcover the Secrets of Thy Will, walk in Thy Way, and execute the Gracious Purpoſes of Thy Will! Let that Omnipotent

* Pſ. 31. 5.

potent Arm, without which I can do Nothing, Aſſiſt and Strengthen me, that Being Truly Poor in Spirit, and Abſtracted in Life, and free from All thoſe Deluſions that would withdraw me from my God, I may fix my Soul, as I Ought to do On All thoſe Spiritual Bleſſings, which are only to be found In Thy Poverty.

O Moſt Holy Mother, of My Ever-Living Saviour! who haſt truly followed the Pattern of his Exemplary, Poor Condition In This World! And doſt Impart of His Heavenly Treaſures! Thou haſt not Only A Parental Affection for the Poor, but alſo for Fallen and Diſtreſſed Sinners! Interceed for me that I may be Inſpired with that Divine Grace, that Poverty of Spirit, which has Accumulated ſo much of thoſe Celeſtial Riches upon Thy Self! Aſſiſt, Ye Bleſſed Spirits, this Poor Sinner! Help me, Ye Holy Powers, by Your happy Miniſtration, that through the Contempt of theſe Sublunary Enjoyments, I may Deſerve, One Day, to Rejoyce with You, In the Fruition of thoſe Eternal Joys that ſhall never fade Away. *Amen.*

THE Twelfth Instance OF THE SUFFERINGS OF Our Blessed Saviour.

CHAP. XII.

In the Austerity of His Life.

I. VOluntary Poverty is Usually Accompany'd with Austerity of Life: The Saints who have Countenanc'd This Grace, and Subjected themselves, Soul and Body, By Renouncing the Riches of This World for their Stronger Impressions of Love to God; To this their Renunciation, have Join'd

Join'd the Practice of An Auſtere and Penitential Life, Every One In his Own way, and According to his Strength; In Order to Correct the Wanton Motions of the Fleſh, and bring it Under a Regular Subjection to the Spirit; And, In Relation to the Body, to Expreſs that Religious Averſion and Abſtractedneſs from The Very Accomodations of Life, which The Bleſſed Jeſus has So much Recommended to us: Of which Neceſſary Point of Duty He has Exhibited, In the Pattern of his Own Life, whilſt He Convers'd with Mankind upon Earth, the Moſt Rare and Particular Inſtances, for Our Imitation; And Although He was Under No Neceſſity, Like us, to Mortify His Sacred Body, which Never Launcht out Into Exceſs, nor Ran Counter to his Spirit; Yet Becauſe He was Come Into the World, Not Only to Be Our Attonement, But alſo to Inform us In Our Way to Heaven, He Graciouſly Condeſcended to make his Own Perſon The Model, and In That to Set Before us The Perfect Image of All Vertues, And thoſe Eſpecially which are moſt Neceſſary for us, without any Regard to The Dignity of his Own Majeſty! For, Having Undertaken to Attone for Our Sins, As He Never Declin'd Any Torment They put upon Him In his Paſſion; So He Omitted No Painful Work, that might Afflict and Mortifie his Humanity.

This Divine Redeemer of Our Souls, Knew of what Neceſſity and how much Importance this Duty of Penance was to us: And, Becauſe the Contrition of Soul, Under A Senſe of Sin, was Incompatible with his moſt Immaculate and Inoffenſive Purity, He took upon Him the External Part, which is Nothing Elſe, but An Auſtere,

Auſtere, and Rigorous Life: This He Recommended to us, as A Plank to Save A Soul In Shipwrack, to be of Service to us, as a Work Conſecrated by his Own Perſonal Mortifications.

II. There have been many Saints, who have Led A more Strict and Auſtere Life, Even than The Bleſſed Jeſus Himſelf did: St. *John* the Baptiſt, Neither Ware Such Cloaths, nor Liv'd on Such Proviſion as was Uſual to Mankind: And This Singular Auſtereneſs of his Life drew upon Him the Eyes and Admiration of the World; Who are Always Apt to Judge of the Merit of Vertue from the Outward and Superficial Appearance of it: And This Made thoſe Preciſe Phariſees So Squeamiſh when they Saw The Bleſſed Jeſus Aſſociate with and at The Table of Diſreputable and Sinful Men. But for All that, All the Utmoſt Rigours that the Moſt Holy Saints have Exercis'd, tho' they May have been Greater, Yet they were far Short of The Perfection of His: All They Underwent, was but Exerciſing Themſelves In the Loweſt Degree of Penance, which was to Labour Hard for the Cure of Their Souls; To Bridle the Extravangances of Corrupt Nature, And to Suppreſs its Irregular Appetites and Paſſions; But the Auſterity of Jeſus Chriſt Gave A Sanction, and Inhanc'd the Price, and Transfer'd Weight and Efficacy to that of Good and Holy Men, whoſe Works of Penitence do Hereby Become Powerful and Energical to Procure Thoſe Great and Extraordinary Graces which have Made Thoſe Holy Victims So Acceptable to Almighty God! The End Theſe Holy Recluſes Propoſe, by the Penances they So Voluntarily

tarily Inflict upon Themſelves is that thereby they May Deſtroy what Ever Stands In their Way, whatever would Prevent the Eagerneſs of the Souls In its Flight to God; But The Severities the Bleſſed Jeſus Determin'd upon Himſelf, were the Mere Effects of His Love, and Proceeded from A Principle of Ineffable Charity and Good Will; Therefore They Ought to have Been More Rigorous In Saints, who Yet were Sinful Duſt, But More Exemplary and Imitable In Jeſus Chriſt, who was to be A Model Adapted and Proportion'd to Our Weakneſs.

The Bleſſed Jeſus Never Appear'd above the Level of his Humanity, unleſs it were In Thoſe Works of His wherein he did not Expect that We Could follow Him; As In his Power of Working Miracles; In The Efficacy and Authority of His Word, and In The Sublime of His Doctrine; But What He Ever Oblig'd or Advis'd us to Imitate Him in, was Only In that Common Courſe of Life, which had Nothing of Extraordinary In it; Leaſt it ſhould Diſcourage us; And what was Steddy, without Intermiſſion, thereby to fix our Fluctuating and Un-Settled Nature. He Cloath'd Himſelf In Wool; Fed upon Common Diet; Oftentimes Contenting Himſelf with a Cruſt of Barley Bread and A Little Water; And if at any Time He gave the Leaſt Looſe to this Abſtemious way of Living, upon the Accident of An Invitation to dine with any One whoſe Soul He was Seeking after, He forthwith Return'd and Betook Himſelf to his former Strictneſs: The Cold Earth was His Bed; And His Eyes were No Longer Cloſed than Nature did Require to wind up the Wearied

ed Senſes In! And He Never put Himſelf to the Expence of A Miracle to Supply any Neceſſities of his Own, Leaſt any One ſhould have A Scruple about his Very Human Nature: To Theſe Auſterities He Added Many Works of Great Pains and Difficulty; Undertaking Many a Weary Journy, with Watchings, and Prayers Day and Night, with Continual Faſtings and Many Other Inſtances of the Severeſt Rigours which have not been Written.

III. It is not Eaſy to Set down In Particular, to what Degree and How far we ought to Go, In Imitation of The Bleſſed Jeſus In This Vertue: Since Every Perſon has not the Same Strength, The Same Neceſſities, nor does not Meet with the Same Call, and Circumſtances with Another: All therefore that Can be Said, In this Place, 'till we Come to Speak of it More at Large, is, that we muſt avoid Both Extremes of too Much and too Little.

The Principal Part, and Main Article of Pennance Conſiſts In an Inward Sorrow, and Abhorrence of the Sins which We have Committed; And In This we Can Never do too much; Becauſe It Increaſes In The Soul, In Proportion to The Light and Flame of Love that God has Shed There; And Becauſe we Cannot, In this Life, Conceive any Full Idea of the Deformity of Sin; Nor Love God according to his Worthineſs, and the Charms of His Goodneſs: Yet He is Satisfied We ſhould Deplore Our Guilt, Proportinable to that Meaſure of Light and Grace He Beſtows upon us: But We Muſt, at Leaſt, Endeavour, to Work our Selves up Into a Senſe of Sorrow and Contrition by the Acts of Piety, the Practice of Good Works, and whatever Lies

In

In Our Power; And when A Man Neglects these Means, He is Always In Great Danger of his Salvation.

He whom The Sense and Knowledge of his Sins does not Withdraw from the Occasions that Prompted Him to Commit Them, who does Not Confess them with an Honest and Sincere Openness of Heart; But Dissembles them, Or Lessens his Guilt, or Varnishes it Over, with a design Not to Amend, or to do Penance for it, and Mortifie those Unclean and Violent Inclinations that Induc'd Him to them, Flatters Himself In vain with any Notion of Truth Penitence: For All these Defects In This Necessary duty shew plainly that there is Still Remaining Some Disposition to Go on The Same way; And that his Heart is very Little Contrite, for his Sins; And Yet, these things are but too Common; Especally Among Young Persons, who Seldom are In Earnest, and Hearty In their Repentance, and are Not frequently out of the way of Wickedness; Nor Care Much to Resist the Propensities of Corrupt Nature:

The Sign of True Repentance, According to St. *Jerom*, is to * *Hate Sin as much as we have Loved it*; According to St. *Ambrose* to † *Suffer Voluntarily, In Abhorrence of Ones Life past, All Sorts of Injuries, to Repair Those We have Done to God*: And According to the Devout *Tamlerus*; Not to ask of God More Forgiveness than Correction, through an Entire Resignation to The Divine Justice. In This Last Opinion Consists the Perfection of a Sincere and Inward Repentance; But Because It is not Common, The Holy Scripture Only Warns us that ‖ *We should Still fear for Sins, that are forgiven*: Not that God will

* Ep. 4. ad Penitentes In Sec. vesp.

† Amb. L. 2. De Pen. *C.* 6.

‖ Eccles. 3. 14.

will Ever Call us to an Account for thoſe Sins that are already Remitted, But for fear the Aſſurance of Our Forgiveneſs for what is paſt, ſhould Diſpoſe us to fall Eaſily again Into the Like Tranſgreſſion: Beſides that Without A Special Revelation we Cannot be Certain that Our Sins are Forgiven; but Only have a Belief, Grounded upon the Conjectures that we Make upon Our having Made Uſe of The Means God has Preſcrib'd to prevail upon his Mercy: Moreover, we Cannot be Certain whether or Not we have Us'd Our Diligence According to what is Required for it.

Therefore we muſt Ever Deplore the Sins we have Once Committed, And be Under Continual Apprehenſious Leaſt we ſhould fall Into New Tranſgreſſions: For, Since, after the Greateſt Inſtances of Contrition and Repentances, weStill feel Our Selves So Ready to be Carry'd away Into Our former Sins, we have Reaſon to be always under a Dread and Humble Apprehenſion, that Our Abhorrence of the Sins we have Committed, was not So Strong as to Root out all the Roots of it, which it may have Left In the Soul.

For this Reaſon The Saints Teach us that Pennance ſhould be Repeated So Long as we are Obnoxious to Sin, that is, 'till we Leave this World: Becauſe Sin is of So Malicious a Nature, that, we Ought to Conclude, that it Cannot be Eradicated but by A Contrition full as Long as The Thread of Life; And That God, In his Merciful forgiveneſs of Our Treſpaſſes, does not Diſpenſe with The Obligations we are Under to be Wipeing out Thoſe Stains upon Our Souls with Repeated Sighs and Tears;

Tears: And Here we May See The Difference Between the Pennance of Devoted Saints and that of Ordinary, Common Sinners: Although theſe Religious Recluſes, Satisfy for their Sins, They Never Satisfy Themſelves with the Pennances and Sorrows they Inflict upon Themſelves: They Still Go on to Bewayle their Sins, More and More to Abhor and deteſt them, To Fly from the Contagion, And Tremble at the Monſter: Whereas The Others, On the Contrary, Soon Drive it from their Thoughts; The Leſs They Feel The Weight of it, The More Eaſily they perſwade Themſelves, that their Crimſon is become White! And Under theſe Deluſions, they Stifle the Returns of Guilt upon their Souls, and Walk on In Peace, and a falſe Quiet to the Grave.

But Let Such Conſider what The Bleſſed Jeſus has done, what He has Suffer'd, and what Our Attonement and Reconciliation has Coſt Him; And They will See, In Him; There is Much More Reaſon for Them to be Apprehenſive Than Secure: Let them take Notice, In this Divine Model, of the Three Marks of True Repentance And They will find that The Moſt Profligate, and Reprobate Sinner has Never Taſted So Much Pleaſure In his Luſts, as The Bleſſed Redeemer has undergone Sorrow and Torment to Expiate and Over ballance it: That Our Merciful Saviour has Endur'd More Opprobrious Ignominy and Reproach, than The Soul of the Moſt Ambitions Man Can Even Wiſh for, of the Glittering Pageantries of this World; whoſe * *Joy it was to Save us Even by the Reproachful Death upon The Croſs*; And That Not Content to Purchaſe for us The Free

* Heb. 12. 2.

Pardon and Remiſſion of Our Sins; But He muſt Needs Undertake to go Through Such Pains and Torments as not Only Ballanc'd but Even Surpaſs'd the Greatneſs of Our Guilt. But as He was Well Appris'd of the Inconſtancy and Evil Diſpoſition of Our Heart, that His Sufferings and Merits Might Not be In Vain, He has Included the Energy and Vertue of them In The Sacraments; Sanctifying, by thoſe Means, Our Sufferings by his Own, that, as we are Continually Attack'd by Our Own Irregular Appetites and Paſſions, We Might have On the Other hand, Continual Succours and Reinforcement to Enable us to Stand the Battle: So that, whoever does but Know Perfectly what Sin is, Will Never Ceaſe to Bewaile his Own and thoſe of Others; And to Lament The Dangers we are In of Relapſing Every Moment.

From this Diſcourſe there are Two Things to be Infer'd: *Firſt* That God is always Ready to Forgive us; Whenever we Return to Him with a Sincere Sorrow for Our Offences: *Secondly*, That Out of the Love we Owe Him, we ſhould Always Maintain and feed that Fire which would Enflame Our Souls with a Senſe of Ingratitude and Tranſgreſſion, So as to Abhor the Returning any More to Wallow In that Mire.

IV. Every Chriſtian Soul, Ought to Imitate The Bleſſed Jeſus, In the Exemplary Auſterities and Mortifications of his Life; But the Degrees of it Muſt be Left to Every Man's Own Diſcretion! To The Strength He has for Spiritual Conflict, and Self Denyal, and to the State and Condition of his Life: In Which Theſe Following Rules May be Obſerv'd.

Firſt,

First: We Ought to Conſider the Neceſſities of the Body, without any Regard to its Appetites and Evil Inclinations: And to be Induſtrious to Examin what it Really Stands In Need of In Relation to the Circumſtances of Time, and Place, and Buſineſs, and Inward and Outward Diſpoſitions; For Difficult it is to Preſcribe A Rule, In this Matter, that ſhall be General and Applicable to all the World! But One May Say, In the Main, That A Good Man May Deceive Himſelf, when Under the Pretence of Neceſſity He Sooths Himſelf, and Indulges with what is too Choice and Exquiſite; To The Infringement of his Vow, of Poverty, Temperance, Mortification, Abſtraction, Liberty of Mind, and Even Charity and Conformity to his Holy Incorporation; In which, at this Rate, It would not Seldom Happen, that One Religious May Want Neceſſaries, whilſt Another Exceeds the Limits and Intentions of his Order. Beſides, Secular Men, who, whilſt they Pretend to Comply with theſe Neceſſary Duties, follow more the Bias of Their own Corrupt Nature, And plead A Neceſſity for Every thing they So Eagerly Hone after; Fall Into Infinite Exceſſes and Diſorders. Therefore The moſt Sure Way Both for Religious and Seculars too, is to Conſult A Prudent, Vertuous and Dis-Intereſſed Director, and Reſolve to Stand to his Direction.

Secondly, We muſt not Grant to Nature, without the Utmoſt Caution, any thing It Importunes for, Out of the Regular Courſe of Our Religious Way: And Under this View, we Ought to be aware of All Our Virtious Inclinations, which are the very Spring of all Our Exceſſes.

Thirdly, We muſt All of us, Be Bearing forward In Our Spiritual Way; To have it In Our Minds, that we fall not ſhort of what we Might do if we were In Earneſt! And That we Deceive not Our Selves, In Believing we Can poſſibly Supererogate, Let us do what We Can: For Under Theſe Notions, we ſhall be more Cautious, and afraid of what Liberty We take Even In Our Neceſſary and Common Courſe of Life.

Fourthly, We ſhould be Very Careful In uſing more frequent Rigorous Auſterities In Oppoſition to thoſe Particular Vices We are the Moſt Subject to fall Into; And to which we are moſt Propenſe. All Medicaments are not Equally Powerful againſt all Diſtempers: The Itch of Tattling is Sooner Cur'd by Silence than by Faſting: Wantonneſs and Impure Deſires by a Conſtant Guard upon the Senſes And Addreſs to God, than by Silence; Thoſe therefore who Pretend to Mortifie without The Proper Application; May Afflict Themſelves, but Imprudently and to no Purpoſe.

Fifthly, Pennance, which Conſiſts In Faſtings Watchings, Sackcloath, Diſcipline, Hard Lodging, Courſe Habits and the Like, is Always Wholſom to the Soul, when It is Impoſed by the Authority of The Church, by the Orders of A Religious Houſe, or By the Injunction of A Prudent Director: It is Prejudicial when it Hinders us from Diſcharging our Obligations; It is Culpable when it Proceeds from Self-will; But ſo much the more Praiſe Worthy, as it Subjects the Fleſh to The Spirit: Provided Nevertheleſs that we don't Neglect the Other Inſtances and Duties of Mortification that are more Important.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, The moſt Beneficial and Neceſſary Act of Self-Denyal and Auſterity is That which Bridles The Senſes and Curbs the Paſſions, Sets Bounds to The Tongue, and Limits Our very Words; that Retrenches Idle Extravagance, and That Looſe Men Give Themſelves to Tranſgreſs, that Mortifies Self-will, Obſtinacy In Opinion; and the vain Eſteem of Our Selves: This Sort of Mortification, above all Others has this Advantage, that It is Practiced without Danger; And it is Hardly Poſſible to Exceed in it; That the Superficial and Carnal Man Endures any External Act of Pennance Rather than Confine Himſelf This way; It Touches Him Too near and to The Quick, And He Can Never Bear it.

Laſt of All! But The moſt Severe Inſtance of All Sorts of Pennance, In the Opinion of Devotees, and Religious of the Strickteſt Experience, is, That of Interiour Recollection and Continual Prayer: They Only who are Devoted to That Order, Can be Apprehenſive what It is: And There are but Very Few, if thy Liſten'd to the Dictates of Nature, who would not Rather go to Plough, or Undertake the Greateſt Drudgery 'tis Poſſible for A Man to Suſtain Himſelf Under, than to Spend the Time They do In the Courſe of Their Devotions: For the Very Liberty of the Thoughts, So Natural to Mankind, is under a Conſtraint by their Rules: The very Deſires are Countermanded; The Inclinations Kept Back: The Will Chained Down, The Mind upon the Watch, Guarding againſt Any that Might Inſinuate or Glide In to Diſturb it, or Interrupt The Repoſe of the Heart; And In a Word The whole Man is

Chained down, So that He Can't So Much as Caſt an Eye on what He Loves, Nor Taſt a Drop to Allay the warmth of his Deſires: And Although, by Long Cuſtom, A Man Arrives, at Laſt, to A Life, Quiet, Contented, And full of Un-utterable Joys, that Reſult from The Love of God; Although, Every Thing then, is In perfect Harmony, And the Body is Under An Entire Subjection to the Spirit, it is Nevertheleſs, very Often So Weaken'd, So Broken, So Exhauſted, that it wants Comfort, And dares not, for all that, Refreſh it Self but with the Utmoſt Reſerve; Leaſt it ſhould Loſe this State of a Continual Death, And by Succouring the Body, prejudice the Union the Soul has With God.

It were to be Wiſht That Every Soul That's Touch'd with The Spirit of Pennance would Give up to This! The Beſt Advice that can be Given to Thoſe, whoſe Small ſhare of Health, or the Circumſtances of their Condition Renders them Leſs Capable of Corporal Auſterities, to Apply Themſelves with Sincerity to The Exerciſe of Prayer and Devotion; In which They may Excellently perform A moſt Religious Pennance.

Many There are, who In Reading the Lives of Saints, are Enflam'd with a Deſire of Devoting Themſelves to God, and of Working out their Salvation; But They are Diſhearten'd when They See The Pennance of Such Mortified Men: But Let Them take Notice that this Diſcouragement is A Snare that the Wicked One Lays In their way, to Detain Them In their Lukewarmneſs and Indifferency towards their God: That God does not Require Them to take

take The Vows and Auſterities of Saints upon Them, But to Be of the Same Spirit and Diſpoſition; And then God Will Enlighten Them with his Grace, And Inſpire them with what is moſt proper to Expiate their Sins, and to Deſtroy whatever Oppoſes Itſelf to The Love of God In Them; Yet Let Them Bleſs Almighty God In his Saints, Whoſe Devoted Auſterities They Cannot but Admire; Let them Humble Themſelves; And Strive to go as far as they Can: For In Heaven There are Many Manſions; And the Stars Differ from Each Other In their Superiour Orbes and Their Reſplendent Glory.

A

Divine Contemplation

With Our Bleſſed Saviour upon The Auſterity of His Life.

O Gracious Lord! Who Art The Deſire and Expectation of Thy Faithful Servants! The Phyſician and the Remedy to All Our Evils! Behold me Here Before the Eyes of thy Mercy! All Over Sores, and Mangled with Wounds; which Thou Canſt See far better Than My Self; I Know The Sin that has Brought Them upon Me! The Puniſhment I Deſerve, The Injury I have done to Thee; I.

But Thou Only Knoweſt the Enormity of it, as Thy Self alone art the Only Cure that Can Aſſwage the Anguiſh of my Soul! I Neither Can nor Will Withdraw my Self or fly from thy Juſtice: But Submit my Self, With a Hearty Reſignation to all the Stripes of thy Paternal Hand! And However Ingrateful I have been for the Indulgent Bleſſings I have Received from thy Goodneſs; I now Will Bear with Patience my Correction and my Cure: I Open my Caſe to Thee, O Kind and Tender Phyſician! Shew me The Danger of my Diſtemper, and the Malignity of the Poyſon that is In me! That I may be Senſible of my Souls Sickneſs, that I may Bewayl its Condition, and Quench the fire of thy Wrath and Indignation with my Tears! I own that I have Nothing to Preſent to Thee, Nothing to Commute for my Soul, but what with the Utmoſt Juſtice Thou mayſt Reject and Caſt Behind Thee! That the Impreſſions of my Death are Signed Deep upon All my Faculties and Senſes, and the Fatal Sentence Written upon Every Action of my Life! For * *No Man Living Shall be Juſtified In Thy Sight!* Theſe Eyes, I Ought Ever to be Lifting up to Thee, My forgiving God! Are Witneſſes of the Sins They have Inveagl'd me to Commit againſt thy Purity! This Tongue which now is Pleading with Thee for Pardon, is no Leſs Conſcious of its Having Argued a Thouſand Times againſt the Dictates of thy Will! Theſe Ears which Have So Often Heard thy Word, are fill'd with all the Traſh, thoſe vain and trifling Suggeſtions they Have Hearken'd to, againſt thy Law: All this Earthly Frame is Every where Engraven, and Mark'd with the Characters of Guilt, of which

* Pſ. 143. 2.

which it has been the Inſtrument to Convey it to the Soul.

I Proſtrate my Self at thy Feet, O my God! Behold here, the Tranſgreſſour of thy Law! The Enemy of thy Glory! The Deſtroyer of thy Works! A Prodigal of thy Favours! A Slave to the Vileſt Appetites, and Paſſions! Always Prone to Evil! Ever Oppoſite and Reverſe to Good! Who never had any Notion of the Neceſſary Work of Pennance! Slack and faint In thy Service! Who always thwarted that Light and thoſe Inward Motions which would have Soften'd Him Into Repentance; and was the More Inflexible and Harden'd at thy Severer Calls to His Converſion! Shall This Wretched, Baſe, Senſual, Defiled Soul preſume to Appear Before thy Immaculate and perfect Purity! Thou didſt Create it Free, and at its Own Diſpoſal; and by its Eſtranging itſelf from Thee, it has Enſlav'd itſelf, Under a moſt ſhameful Drudgery, and Bondage; It is Become more Servile to the Fleſh, than Obedience to its God! Wholly taken up, and Drown'd In Senſual Pollutions; Deaf to the Gentle Whiſpers of thy Holy Spirit! Negligent and Unactive In its Duty; Diſtracted In its Imaginations, Exceſſive In its Deſires; And Labouring Under all thoſe Miſeries which Thou Beholdeſt and doſt Abhor; and, to Complete its Miſeries, Divorced from Thee, O My God! Who art the very Energy and Exiſtence of Life itſelf.

II. Thou Knoweſt, O moſt Holy Lord! That I Can have no true Idea of The Conſequence of thoſe Sins, which have drawn down thy Wrath and Vengeance upon my Soul! How then Can

Can I Attone thine Anger; and what Sin Offering Can I make when I Appear In thy Sight! I Can Pretend to Nothing Elſe, moſt Gracious God! But the Chaſtiſement and Juſt Sentence of Death which Thou Wilt Pronounce againſt me, Unleſs Thou ſhalt Vouchſafe to Look upon me with the Eyes of Thy Mercy! Thou Haſt Born with the Exceſſes of my Youth, and Irregularities of my Life, with A Fatherly Indulgence; Thou haſt Seen me, Like One that has Loſt his Senſes; In my full Career, after the moſt ſhameful and Ignominious Abominations; Catching at Every Opportunity of doing thoſe things that Offend Thee: Dazled with a Thouſand Vanities, which I Purſu'd with the Utmoſt Zeal and Ardency, Under an Entire Forgetfulneſs of Thy Law or the Salvation of my poor Soul! Swallow'd up In the Luxuriance of Unlawful Pleaſures, and Divided Into Many Different Affections of which Thou, My God, Hadſt no ſhare Allowed Thee! Thou Haſt ſeen me Impos'd upon, Wandring out of my Way, Loſt and Undone, Hovering upon The Brinks of Hell, and Haſt pull'd me Back, when I was Juſt falling precipitate Into the Abyſs of Torment!

I am the Wretched Creature Thou haſt Waited for So Long; Although Thou waſt not Ignorant of my Guilt, nor the Blindneſs which made me that I had no Senſe of it! Alaſs! My Conſcience is Harden'd Still! What ſhall I do then, O my Merciful God! For Thou upholdeſt me from Deſpair, although I can find Nothing In me to Ground any Hope upon! O Kind and Charitable Shepherd of A Flock that's gone Aſtray! Who, In Tenderneſs to my Soul wilt

no:

not Let me find any Cure for it out of Thee, altho' the Treſpaſs that I have Committed be againſt thy Self! Who Haſt Tranſferr'd Thy Merits upon My Soul, to Give me Hope In thy Mercy; and by Thine Own Example Taught me to Return and Humble my Self Before Thee by the Salubrious Work of PENNANCE and *Mortification!* Open Thou Mine Eyes that I may be Truly Conſcious of My Sins; and Have A perfect Abhorrence of whatever In me is Diſpleaſing and an Abomination In thy Sight!

Eternal Thanks and Praiſe be for ever Aſcribed unto Thee, O Thou Divine Paſtor of Our Souls! For the Mercy that has induced Thee to Take My Sins upon Thee! Let me Ever Adore Thee for That Thine Ineffable and Moſt Endearing Charity, which mov'd Thee to Undertake So Laborious a Task for my Comfort! I Adore For Thoſe Tedious Watchings, That Craving Hunger, Parching Thirſt and All Thoſe Other Painful and Bitter Trials Thou haſt Conquered for My Sake! Let me, In the moſt Profound Adoration, Acknowledge Thy Love, In Thoſe Rigorous Severities, of Thy Life of Penitence and Sorrow, by which, for the Space of Thirty Years Together, Thou didſt Expiate Thoſe Criminal and Forbidden Pleaſures to which I had Abandoned and Sold my Self! I Adore that Immenſe Charity of Thine which has Impreſt upon Thee Such a Senſe and Compaſſion of my Miſeries; That deep and Solemn Grief with which Thou haſt Lamented my Sins! That Fervent Burning Zeal, which drove Thee On to Satisfie for My Soul with Thy Precious Blood! I Adore thoſe Inexpreſſibly Meritorious Works, which have opened the Treaſures

of

of Divine Mercy, and the Gates of Heaven! Thoſe Amazing Myſteries of Thy Paſſion, which have Arreſted the Juſt Vengeance of Thy Father; Thoſe Precious Pearls, which So Often trickled down and Bedew'd thy Cheeks; Thoſe Emblems of Thy Sorrows which purchas'd the Forgiveneſs of my Sins, and the Never-Ceaſing Joys and Triumphs of the Bleſſed.

III. Give me, O Lord! The Senſe I Ought to have of All the Inſtances of Thy Bounteous Goodneſs! In Thoſe Tedious Nights Thou haſt Paſs'd in Praying for my Soul; And to Draw Down The Bleſſings of God Upon Me! Still hadſt Thine Eye, Thoſe Criminal Nights in which I offended Thee with the Deeds of Darkneſs! Theſe Were preſent to thy Sight! and In Thy Many Languiſhings under the Severities of ſharp Hunger and Thurſt, Thou Still hadſt Thine Eye, and Aggravated thine Anguiſh with the Thoughts of my Luxury and Intemperance! Under thy Greateſt Labours and Fatigues, thou didſt foreſee the Lukewarm Supineneſs and Indifferency of my Soul! When In the Tenderneſs of thy Compaſſion, thou wert Weeping A Deluge for my Sins, and ſhedding Flouds of Tears for Me, Thou Kneweſt the Hardneſs of my Stoney Heart! Thou Beheldeſt me Cold and Frozen to thy Love, when thine Amazing Goodneſs fir'd thee with A Zeal which Deliver'd Thee up to Death for My Sake! Amidſt the moſt Severe Auſterities of Thy Life, Thou didſt Conſider the Licentiouſneſs and Nicety of Mine! And In All The Idea's and Foreſight of Thine Infinite Wiſdom, I was Inſtantly In my Cariere, and Precipitate to Perdition, at the very Time that thou waſt Labouring for my Salvation!

vation! How was I upon The Wing to Fly the Allurements of thy Love, by which Thou waſt Endeavouring, and doing All Thou Couldſt to Draw me to Thee! All the Delight I took was to Offend Thee by my Sins, for which thou Waſt Reſolv'd to Suffer, and I was very Eager and Attentive to Indulge and Careſs My Body, Whilſt Thou for my Sake waſt Afflicting and Tormenting Thine! And when, Like A Tender and Indulgent Father, who Would not the Death of A Sinner But Rather That He ſhould Return from his Tranſgreſſions and Live, Thou wert taking All this Pains to Save my Soul, I was Only Contriving how to Damn my Self, and Work out my Ruin.

Oh! My God! Behold Here the Sinner Thou Haſt Undergone So much for; The Very Prodigal, who was, Then, Preſent to thy View! And who is, Always, Poor Miſerable, and Unfaithful! Such as I am, I Caſt my Self at Thy Feet! But I Bring, with me, The Merits of Thy Sufferings; And The Promiſes of Thy Mercy! For Theſe I Beſeech Thee, O Lord! And, that I may Prevail with Thee for Them, I Offer The thy Faſtings, Thy Vigils, Thy Prayers, and The Rigourous Hardſhips and Auſterities Thou Haſt Gone through! Regard The Injuries and Sorrows Thou Haſt Endured! And forgive me The Sins that I have Committed! If Thou Wouldſt not that A Sinner ſhould Periſh, Becauſe He is The Work of thy Hands, and Thou Loveſt Every Creature Thou Haſt Made, How Canſt Thou Endure that I ſhould Loſe the Fruit of So Many Labours! And That thy Merits ſhould be In vain!

Thou

IV. Thou Haſt Seen So much Malice and Enormity In my Sins, that Thou Couldſt find no Other way to Wipe out Theſe Stains but with thy Precious Blood: Thou didſt Judge thy Sufferings the Neceſſary Remedy for All Thoſe Great and Execrable Evils; And Thou wouldſt not Reſt 'till Thou Hadſt Completely Finiſhed my Cure! And I, who am the Authour of my Own Miſery; And Carry theſe Seeds of Death About me; I Eat, and Sleep, And Live and Live Unconcern'd with my Mortal Enemy! And Look Upon Him as my Companion, Nay; Oftentimes, as the Delight of my Soul! Pitty my Blindneſs, O Thou Divine Goodneſs! And Since thou Haſt So many Years, done Pennance to Expiate My Sins; By that Meritorious work I Conjure the to Tranſfer the Fruits thereof, and Communicate them to My Soul, Even a Perfect ſenſe and Knowledge of my Guilt, and A Lively Sorrow for my Tranſgreſſion.

Diſpel O Lord! This Darkneſs that is Within me! And Pull down this Thick Wall that Separates me from Thee! Is it Poſſible to Conceive A Greater Evil, than to take Pleaſure, In doing That which is ſuch an Abomination to Thee, as to Avenge it, Thou Wilt Condemn thoſe Souls, to Eternal Death, for whom Thou haſt ſo Great A Love, So Tender a Regard as to Suffer Death thy Self upon The Croſs for Their Sakes! And notwithſtanding All This, I am ſo Infatuate and Blind, that I look upon Sin as a Trifle, that I Regret it ſometimes as an Unhappy Diſappointment, when I am prevented In my Carier of Sinning on.

I know not what to ask In Anſwer to My Deſires, Neither Can I tell even what I Ought to Ask: Were I but Enlightened with Thy Grace, O My God! As Long as My Life is, I ſhould Spend All My Days In Mourning, and Spin out its whole Thread In Sable, for The Guilt of it, Had I but One Single Sin to Waſh away with My Tears; And Behold! I am Aſleep and Unconcern'd, with The Load of A Numberleſs Accumulation of them upon My Soul! But Since My Blindneſs is So Great as that I Neither know what to Deſire nor what to Ask that is Proper for Me, O Thou God of Mercy! Do Thou Thy Self Interceed for Me with That Eternal Spirit, whoſe Guidance Thou didſt follow In thy Mortal State! Enquire of That Bleſſed Guide, On what Account it was, that He Induced Thee to faſt ſo often? Wherefore He Enjoyn'd Thee Such a Continu'd Life of Watchings, and Sufferings for My Sins? And According to The Anſwer He ſhall make, Inform My Soul In that Sacred Light, and Teach me That which I know not In my Blindneſs to Ask for! Caſt Thine Eyes upon thine Own Sufferings, O Lord! And Let Them Plead for what They have Infinitely Merited In my Behalf.

V. Do Thou Diſpoſe All my Senſual Faculties, and the Powers of my whole Corporeal Part to Thy Service! Thou Knoweſt how This Living Clay, is In Perpetual Agitation againſt the Happineſs of my Soul! And that it often Choaks and Stifles the Good Seed which Thou doſt Caſt therein: Beſtow upon me, therefore, Strength and Courage to Encounter and Oppoſe this fatal Enemy! O Teach me to diſcover All its Stratagems and Snares; And the Malice

Malice that lies Conceal'd under All its Wiles and Artifice to Deſtroy me! For what Can I do, without Thy Aſſiſtance, againſt an Adverſary ſo Dangerous and Terrible! Thou haſt Given it me, for the Companion of my Pilgrimage! And oblig'd me to Support and Nouriſh it, Leſt it ſhould Faint; And to Chaſten and Correct it, that it may not Rebel! How Ill do I obſerve ſo neceſſary a Medium! For I am much more Inclined to Indulge and Sooth my Senſual Part, than to Chaſtiſe it! And this has Given it ſo much the Aſcendant Over me, and the Preſumption and Hardneſs to Riſe up againſt me! Bleſſed Lord! Do Thou Nail and Faſten, my Rebel Fleſh! O Bind it faſt There with the Cords of Thy Love! And Inſpire me, by Thine own Auſterity, with A Diſcretion, A Courage and Unſhaken Reſolution, to Treat This Body of Sin, as by Thine Own Example Thou haſt ſhewn me How Thou wouldſt have me do it.

Turn away mine Eyes; And Let Thy Fear Cloſe their Lids, that they may not Behold Vanity, but only to deſpiſe it! And not fix their Looks on Any Object that can Hurt or Prejudice My Soul! * *Set A Watch, O Lord, upon My Lips, and put A Bridle In My Mouth!* that I never may Utter that which I ought to keep Silent! † *Life and Death*, according to Thy Word, *are In the Power of the Tongue*; O Grant that mine may never cut a Gaſh, nor cauſe any Wound, Neither In My Self, Nor to My Neighbour! And that rather than Offend by that Aſpen Contagion, and Poiſon'd Arrow, Let me for Ever enjoy Thy Soft and Secret Whiſpers In An Eternal Silence and Retreat! Thou haſt

* Pſ. 141. 3.

† Prov. 18. 21.

haſt ſaid, Moreover, by Thy Prophet, that ‖ *The Senſes are the Gates by which Death Enters Into our Souls:* Shut up then, Theſe my Gates upon Thee, O my God! That Thou only mayſt take up Thy Abode there; And that nothing elſe may enter In, to diſpleaſe Thee! Mortify and Deſtroy My Vitious and Corrupt Affections, and Ballance the Diſpenſations of Thy Providence towards me, In Reſpect to the Periſhable Enjoyments of this World, according to the Cravings, not of my Exorbitant Deſires of the Fleſh, but the mere Neceſſity of Nature, and Common Subſiſtence. ‖ Jer. 9. 11.

Thou, O Lord! art Acquainted with Thoſe Numberleſs Tranſgreſſions which the too Fond and Over-weening Propenſity of the Fleſh has Induc'd me to Commit: O Give me Leave and Time to Lay my Guilt before Thee, By Acknowledging My Tranſgreſſion In the Anguiſh and Bitterneſs of my Soul, by a Faithful Diſquiſition of All the Years of my Life. *And Here Let Penitent Confeſs and Accuſe Himſelf In Particular of All his Paſt Sins; And then make This following Prayer.*

VI. O! Kind and Charitable Phyſician! Fortify My Weakneſs! That I may be Able to Reſiſt My own Perverſe and Corrupt Inclinations! Thou Seeſt theſe Roots of Poyſon, How deep They have Struck Into my Heart; And what Fatal Fruits they have Brought forth in it! O Tear up theſe deadly Principles and Roots within me, even to the ſmalleſt Fibres! Teach me the moſt Acceptable Way In Thy Service; And Give me the Will, and Strength to Perform that In which Thou ſhalt Inſtruct me! Vouchſafe me ſuch a Meaſure of Thy Grace as

may diſpoſe me to Kiſs the Rod with which Thou doſt Correct Me; And to Rejoyce in Tribulations! Since by taking up the Croſs, I find the Means to ſatisfie for My Sins: Create In me an Abhorrence of the Deformity of my Sins, equal to the Guſt with which it has ſtain'd my Soul! That my Heart may lead me with as ſtrong a Bias to the Saving Work of an Auſtere Pennance, as it once drove me Precipitate to Revel In forbidden Pleaſures! But Thou, Moſt Holy Saviour! Thou art Infinitely the beſt Judge of what's moſt Proper and Convenient for me, than I can be my Self! I Abandon My Self unto Thee! Lord forgive me what Thou pleaſeſt; And Afflict me In This Viſitation as Thou thinkeſt fit! All that I deſire is only this, that Thou wilt vouchſafe me the Grace to transform My Will Entirely Into Thine! Smite me; Caſt me into the Flames; Cut me off; And do not Spare me from Thy Refinings In this Temporal and Momentary State; So that I may but meet Thee with Thy Arms Open to Receive me In Thy Mercy when I come to Launch Into That Eternal World.

O My Jeſus! My Salvation! And my Life! Thou canſt put an End to All my Miſeries! Thou Deigneſt to accept the Sacrifices of Love and Friendſhip from Penitent Sinners, with as much Condeſcention and Graciouſneſs, as from thoſe Righteous Souls which have been always at Thy Service! So ſoon as the Repenting *Magdalene* had caſt Her ſelf at Thy Feet; And had Bedew'd Them with Her Tears, Thou didſt Receive Her with the tendereſt of Thy Faithful and Devoted Favourites! And She was

ſoon

ſoon admitted to Refreſh Thy Temples with Her Perfumes! The moſt Zealous of Thy Perſecutors, had no ſooner teſtified His Converſion; And expreſt his Diſpoſition to Become Thy Servant, But Heaven Becomes His Academy, and Thou doſt Vouchſafe to Teach him from Thine own Lips! Raiſe up and Relieve my Broken Heart, O Thou that art the the Life of my Soul! I Embrace thy Sacred Feet! I will Love Thee, Moſt Dear Jeſus! I will Melt my whole Heart into Thee! I will Serve Thee! And Give My whole Self, My All into Thy Boſom! Let My Sins be Drown'd in the Ocean of thy Mercy! and the very Remembrance of them be forgotten!

It's true, Moſt Holy God! that My Soul is Unworthy to appear before ſuch Pure Eyes as Thine! That cannot defend it Self from the Corruption that Be-ſmears it, So that it is Ever Stain'd with a thouſand Spots and Blemiſhes. But what Malice can Come near what Thou Protecteſt! Who can Debaſe and Throw down that which Thou Suſtaineſt! Who ſhall ever part or cut that aſunder, which Thou haſt join'd together! And what Terrour ſhall make him afraid, whom Thou haſt taken into Thy Love! My Soul, ſullied and Miſerable as it is, belongs no Leſs to Thee, than that of Thy moſt Faithful Servant! O My God, if I conſider my Own Impurity, I dare not preſume to approach Thy Glory! But when I Look into Thee! my Heart immediately Throbs and Pants; And all my Inward Powers Languiſh and Sigh after Thee! Take me then, and Incorporate me into Thy Self! And let Thy Holy Fire Conſume the Droſs, All that

Allay that is not Pure in Thy Sight! In Thy Poſſeſſion and Strength I ſhall be Able to do All Things, I can then Apprehend no Difficulty, no Frightful Trial; For Thou art my Treaſure, my Glory and the Centre of all my Happineſs.

O Sacred Mother of God! And Friend to Sinners! Faithful Companion with Thy Only Son, In All his Travels and Afflictions! Who, amongſt the Pureſt of the Rational Creation, Was the Only Perſon Immaculate and Free from All Sin! Pity and Compaſſionate a Miſerable Sinner! Interceed with my Redemer for the Forgiveneſs of my Sins; And that I may Obtain The Grace to Serve Thy Son with Faithfulneſs and Integrity! O Happpy Spirits Ye Bleſſed Inhabitants of The Heavenly *Jeruſalem!* The Foundation of whoſe Miniſterial Building is not only Laid for the Juſt but for Sinners alſo; Accept and Receive the Inclinations of my Soul, to Become One Day, Like You, A Miniſtring Spirit In your Happy Communion! That I may Dwell There with you for ever! And Let no Earthly Object, which your Guardian Miniſtration can prevent, Separate me from your Society In my Father's Kingdom. *Amen.*



THE

Thirteenth Inſtance

OF THE

SUFFERINGS

OF

Our Blessed Saviour.

CHAP. XIII.

In His Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs.

THE Bleſſed Jeſus has Placed Theſe Qualifications of the Soul, (which Ever has Embelliſht the Lives of Holy Men, And all Thoſe Exemplary Saints, who have Sincerely Devoted themſelves to God's Service) among the Reſt of thoſe Evangelical Vertues, which 1.

do Infallibly Lead to a Happy State: Now by the Word Righteousness, we must Understand, the Sanction of all Christian Vertues; And the Observation of the Divine Law, which Justifies us; which abstracts the Soul from Sin; Converts it wholly towards God; Enlightens it; Refines it; Disposes and Transforms It into the Perfection of His Love; And the Communication of His Gifts. This Hunger and This Thirst after Righteousness, which is Nothing else, but a fervent Desire of Holiness, is of so Great Esteem in God's Sight, that He has thought it Worthy to be Recompenc'd with that which is the Consummation and Ultimate Perfection of All Blessings, Even the Full and Perfect Accomplishment of All that the Soul can Conceive or Desire: * *Blessed are They,* says Christ Himself, *Who do Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness; For They shall be filled.* i. e. They shall Enjoy that Happy State where Almighty God, the very Essence of All Joy and Happiness, is Lov'd and Ador'd without any Reserve or Imperfection: For it is This the Just wish for above All Things; This is Their Felicity and Ineffable Perfection and Fruition.

* *St.* Mat. 5. 6.

II. Now this Hunger after Righteousness, may be Consider'd in a Double Signification; The One, as it Regards Our Own Sanctity; And the Other, That of Our Neighbour. Under the First of These a Man is to be Consider'd In a State of Self-Denial, according to the Impulse that Moves Him to Withdraw from the World and Even from Himself, whereby He may Become Body and Soul, Solely and Entirely Devoted and Appropriated to God: And in the Other Sense; As He Concerns Himself to Propagate

pagate the Knowledge, the Love and Service of His Maker among Mankind! The Recompence of the firſt, is That Bread of Life, which The Bleſſed Jeſus call'd His BREAD and NOURISHMENT, where He ſaid, * *My Meat is to Do the Will of Him that Sent me:* For thoſe Souls that Hunger after Holineſs; ſubmit Themſelves to the Will of God; They have a Taſte of His Purity and Goodneſs, in every Vocation of Life; And all thoſe Duties which the Circumſtances of their Condition Require; Waiting the Happy Moment when They ſhall be Tranſlated to that other State, where They ſhall have the Full and Everlaſting Fruition of Him. As for the Hunger a Man may be ſaid to have, In his Eagerneſs and Deſire after his Neighbour's Good; That can meet with Little Return, till his Works ſhall follow Him to the Judgment-Seat; Becauſe He can Expect No great Matter from His Labours among a Race of Men, who are Rather Inclin'd to follow the Motions of their own Irregular and Lukewarm Diſpoſitions; And The Righteous can only be ſatisfied, where They have no more Vice to Root Out, No Lukewarmneſs, and Indifferency to Kindle into Zeal, Nor Nothing more Wanting that He could Wiſh for His Neighbour's Good, But what He has already in Poſſeſſion.

* St. John 4. 34.

III. There is no Principle of Good-Will, which gives greater Occaſion of Griet to Good Men, than this Thirſt after the Salvation of their Fellow-Creatures: For in Relation to their Own Particular Perfection, They Engage themſelves to pluck out of their Hearts all ſecular Objects, in Thwarting the Propenſitys of Corrupt

rupt Nature; In Subduing Themſelves, and Mortifying Their Bodies; But, In Reſpect to The Salvation of Their Neighbour; When They have Once fixt Their Hearts upon God, as Their Deareſt Object; The Sacred Light ſhines ſtronger In Them, and ſhews Them How Worthy God is of All The Soul and its Affections; And from Hence they Come to be more Senſible How Wretched and Unhappy They are who Run On In a Courſe of Sin! Which Preſſes Them with A Continual Deſire, to See All Mankind under the Same Bleſſed State of Obedience with Themſelves; And they are Not Leſs Concern'd At the Extravagance of Other Men, than for thoſe Miſtaken and unhappy Courſes they might have taken, formerly, Themſelves.

But Becauſe this Twofold Hunger Preys upon the Spirits of the Saints In this Life; God Has Aſſur'd them of Their Recompence; and that It ſhall be Satiated In the Next. It's the Reflexion of St. *Auſtin*, who In Rendring the Beatitudes In The Goſpel Correſpondent to The Gifts of The Holy Spirit, Adds that *The Hunger After Righteouſneſs* Mention'd There, *is Nothing Elſe But The Gift of Fortitude*; *Becauſe it Requires a Great Meaſure of That, to Eradicate The Love of This World From Our Hearts*; *And He That is Truly Influenc'd with The Love of God, Requires Great Aſſiſtance From The Holy Ghoſt, to Enable Him to Support Him Self Under thoſe Impreſſions of Grief and Trouble, which the Perdition of His Fellow Creature Muſt Needs Stamp upon Him*; *And the Impulſes That are Forcing Him on to Take the Utmoſt Pains to Retrieve Him from His Wayes, Maugre All The Contradictions, and Affronts, He*

may

may Have Reaſon to Expect from Such An Undertaking, and Even the Hazard of His Life. This Vertue Therefore is The very Foundation of So Many Heroick Actions, which have been Attempted by the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, for The Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mankind.

IV. The Bleſſed Jeſus has Undergone the moſt Senſible Conſequences of This Vertue; For the Ardent Zeal, And Inſatiate Thirſt, that Parcht his Soul, which Burnt Continually, and ſet Him at Work, to Bring All Mankind Into Submiſſion to the Laws of His Fathers Kingdom; To The Practice of Vertue; To The Abhorrence of Iniquity; To a Perfect Reſignation to The Conduct, and Motions of the Holy Spirit; To The Growth In the Divine Knowledge and Love; Quadrated with The Meaſure of The Love He Bare to his Father. And Becauſe He had The Same ſenſe of Our Sins and Miſeries as if They had Been his Own; He felt Our Loſs and Privation of So many Bleſſings as Quick and Pungent, as if He Himſelf had been Deprived of Them.

This Senſe of Our Evils Laſted, In Him, as Long as His Life: The Bleſſed Apoſtle who had but a Spark of That Immenſe Fire with which The Bleſſed Jeſus was Inflamed, Tells us That * *The Care of All The Churches Devoured Him*; * 2 Cor. 11. 28. *That He was Inwardly Conſumed, by the Scandals he Beheld*; That *He was No more His Own*; Rom. 9. 2. *That The Love of Chriſt Moved Him to Become All Things To Others*; † *That He ſhould Think Himſelf* † 1 Cor. 9. 22. *Happy to Suffer for The Elect*; That *Although Chriſt was His Life*; Phil. 1. 21. *And It would have been Happy for Him to Die*; *He Could not Tell which of Them*

Them He ſhould Chooſe, were it Put Into his Power, Whether to Die to Enjoy Chriſt; Or to Live to Save Souls; That his Love to Chriſt was So Strong as to Deſy All Creatures to Seperate Him from it! That Nevertheleſs The Holy Ghoſt Was his Witneſs, that The Obſtinacy of The Jews Pierc'd his Righteous Soul with So bitter A Grief, that He Would Willingly Give his Conſent to be Separated from Almighty God for The Salvation of his Brethren.

* Rom. 9. 3.

If This Holy Apoſtle had Such Sentiments as Theſe upon The Account of his Brethren, what muſt thoſe have been of The Bleſſed Jeſus, whom an Eternal Love had Drawn down from Heaven, for The Salvation of All Mankind? Who Liv'd for Thirty Years together, Under a Continued Hunger and Thirſt for Our Righteouſneſs! To Whoſe Omniſcient Eyes, All the Sins of Men that Ever had been, or Ever ſhould be Committed, from the Beginning of the World to its Laſt Cataſtrophe were, as if, Actually Preſent! Who Diſtinguiſht The Number of them, And Weigh'd thoſe Enormities In the Ballance by his Eternal Wiſdom; And In a Word, who Wept and Sorrow'd for Them According to the Meaſure of his Endearing Love, and The Extreme Deſires He had to Redeem and to Deliver us from The Wrath to Come!

So Great A Torment This Was to his Righteous Soul, and Created Such a Bitter and So Extreme Anguiſh In his Heart, as is not Poſſible to be Conceiv'd, And it may be Said that He Underwent as Many Deaths as He Saved Souls; For He Prefer'd The Salvation of Souls to his Own Life; And The Treſpaſſes of The World againſt His Fathers Juſtice were more Sharp, and Pierc'd him Quicker than The Nails and Spear

Spear upon The Croſs: He Sacrific'd his Precious Blood for Every Particular Soul of us! And The Load of His Afflictions and Grief Proceeded from his Preſcience, that All this Would not do Neither; But that his Bitter Death would be In Vain to Many!

V. It were Well, if we, would but Conſider, after So Many Offences Committed, by us, In Defiance to God's Juſtice, what We Owe to This, Our moſt Compaſſionate Redeemer; who has So Bitterly Lamented Thoſe Aggravated Sins, that we have Committed Ever Since we were Born, with So Much Eaſe and Pleaſure! But the full and Perfect Conviction of Theſe Idea's are above the Reach of Our ſhort Sight and Comprehenſion: And there is Nothing but Pure, Unment Love Can Make us Comprehend The Extent of Our Obligations In this Point.

We know well Enough With what Care and Affection Parents Bring up Their Children; What an Affliction 'tis to Them, when They Do not Anwer their Education, But Abandon Themſelves to Trifles, to their Giddy Paſſions, or to Bad Company; Deſpiſing the Good Advice of Thoſe Who Love Them. God, Oftentimes, Gives the Like Remonſtrances to us by his Prophets: He Complains that His Children, Proſtitute the Love They Owe Him, to Things that are Pernicious to Them; That They Avoid and Fly from Him; And Care not How they Offend and Diſobey Him; Making Him Subſervient to Their Sins! And He Complains So much The more Juſtly, As He Loves us with A much Greater Tenderneſs, than the moſt Fond Mothers Doat upon their Children.

How

How Does it Aggravate Our Confuſion to See The Anguiſh of The Bleſſed Jeſus, and How his Tender Heart is Rent, for Our Salvation On the One Side; And the Diſguſt, and Flattneſs of Our Souls, In Relation to Thoſe Never-fading Treaſures; And Our Blind, Infatuated Zeal, which Drives us, Like Jehu, In Such a Strong Impetuoſity, after the Tranſient Shadows, for whoſe Sake We Forfeit Our Share In God and Heaven, On the Other?

There Can be no Greater Sign of Reprobation, than to Become Entirely Taſtleſs and Inſenſible of Heavenly Things! For God has Given to Every Faculty Both of Soul and Body a Liking to the Objects that are Proper for them, that Each Faculty ſhould tend to its Reciprocal Relation with a Diſtinguiſhing Ardour and more Eager Bent; That They ſhould Meet and fitt, and Interweave with Pleaſure; And Improve upon Enjoyment: From Hence it Comes to paſs, That * *The Eye is Not Satisfied with Seeing*, as The Holy Scripture Teſtifies, *Nor The Ear with Hearing!* That Hunger and Thirſt Make Eating and Drinking to be more Agreeable; And So, In Reſpect to All the Other Senſes: And when any One of them has No Reliſh, nor Deſire of its Proper Enjoyment, It Neceſſarily Follows, that Conſtitution is Sick, and Interrupted if not Quite Deſtroy'd.

* Eccleſ. 1. 8.

Thus is it with The Soul; Whoſe More Refined faculties Nothing but what is Spiritual and Eternal Can Satiate or fullfill. When That is wholly Sunk down Below and Vitiated with a Laviſh Taſt of Senſual and Earthly things, It has Loſt its Appetite to Thoſe More Sublime and true Enjoyments; When it Grows Inſenſible,

ſible, and Indifferent to them; And they are Become Loathſom to it, or Its Averſion; It is Then In A moſt Evident Danger of its Eternal Perdition: This Evil, which The Fathers Call Inſenſibility, is that which God Complains of, by The Mouth of His Holy Prophets, where He Says that *He has Called and No One has Heard*; *He has Chaſtiſed And No One has Minded*; *He has Smitten, And No One has Felt*; That Men Precipitate Themſelves, as if They were beſides their Senſes, without any fear or Concern, Into Miſery; That They Loſe their God without Regret, or any Reluctance; That they Spend Their Precious Time In A Total Forgetfulenſs of Eternity and A Future State, 'till They come to be Surpriz'd by Death and Sink Down In a Moment Into Hell.

In Hopes that God, In Compaſſion to their Unhappy Condition, may be Pleas'd, by the Light of his Grace, and by a Senſe of his Love, to Draw them Back Into the Right Way; I would Adviſe Theſe Wanderers to what Follows.

Firſt, Let them at Leaſt, Speak Well of Vertue, And Give their Approbation of Vertue wherever they Meet with it, tho' they are not Yet Reſolv'd to Imitate and Practice it: Let Them be Favourable and Good Natur'd to them that are Vertuous and Pious Men; And, although They Themſelves, are far from Leading the Life of the Righteous, at Leaſt, Let them take Care from Offering any Injuries to the Perſons of the Religious, and not Become their Perſecutors; which would be to Anticipate the very Malice of the Devil, before They Come to their Place. It may be that When God Beholds the

the Smalleſt Seed, Even that of Amere Approbation of Vertue In a Profligate, who has Not the Courage to Perform Himſelf that which He Commends In Another, May have Pity upon his Soul, as it has Often Happen'd, and Beſtow an Effectual Meaſure of his Grace, upon him to his Converſion and Salvation.

In the Next Place. Let them Condemn, and Create In Themſelves an Abhorrence, at the Hardneſs of their Hearts; from the Conſideration of their own Unhappy Conduct, and How far Different it is from Theirs who Lead A Sober and Religious Life! Let them Humble Themſelves, and Own the Truth In his Preſence; By this Means the Divine Grace will Not be Totally Extinguiſht In Them; They will Still Lay Hold on Gods Mercy by Some Twig; and will not Go on Uninterrupted In their Habitual Iniquity without ſome Checks of Remorſe.

In a Word, Let them Converſe With God In the Holy Congregation, whoſe Diſcourſe and Examples will, Inſenſibly, Mollifie this Hardneſs; And if It Pleaſes God to Diſcover to Them any Ray or Glympſe of his Light, Let Them Read or Meditate On the Life of Jeſus Chriſt, and their Obligations to Him! This they Will find A moſt Effectual Means to Draw the Soul out of its Languiſhment, to Make his Deſires Bloſſom; And to Inflame it with the Love of Thoſe Everlaſting Treaſures that are All Comprehended In Him who is the Light of the World.

But Let Thoſe whom The Divine Bounty Inſpires with ſome Sentiment of Love, be very Watchful over Themſelves, And they will ſoon Perceive

Perceive that God never Ceaſes to preſs them with his ſecret Calls; And to make them Feel what He Requires of them: They Ought to be Attentive to His Voice; And give themſelves up in Faith to be guided by it; Leaſt a Criminal Neglect ſhould open the Door of their Hearts to the Temptations of the World; And the Relapſe ſhould prove of a much more Dangerous Conſequence, and Breed an Ulcer there, much more Incurable than the firſt.

Let them call to mind, that, In the Old Law, That God would have no other Fire Burn upon His Altar, but that which came from Heaven; And yet it was but Twice, that He gave it to His People: Once in the Wilderneſs, Under the Government of *Moſes*; And the ſecond Time, Under *Nehemias*, upon the *Jews* Return after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity: All the reſt of the Time, They were very Careful to keep up this Holy Fire, and to prevent its going out. The Deſire of the Soul to pleaſe God; This Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs, is a Heavenly Flame, which the Holy Ghoſt Kindles in our Hearts: But we muſt keep it up with the Flowing Sighs and Breathings of our Souls in Love; By Fervent Prayers and a Holy Life. When theſe are neglected, the Flame will go out of Itſelf; And its very difficult to Light it up again: But as that Holy Prieſt, after He had Sprinkled the Muddy Water upon the Victims, Into which the firſt Fire had Been Changed, wait ed till it pleaſed God to Kindle it again; And at laſt He ſaw The Sacrifice Miraculouſly on Fire; So when we offer up to God the Little we have remaining of our firſt Deſires, with Humility and Perſeverance, He

ſuffers

ſuffers Himſelf to be moved, And In Mercy Quickens the Flame of His Love again within us, And Leads us to the Works of Pennance by the Spirit of True Devotion.

Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs Produce the Zeal So Neceſſary to A Chriſtian, But So Difficult to Practice with Diſcretion which it Ought Ever to be Attended with. As The Salvation or Perdition of Souls Often Depends upon the Good or Bad uſe that's made of This Neceſſary Qualification, there Ought to be A Great deal of Caution and Circumſpection In the Management of it: And Becauſe, In Its Outward Appearance, It Seems very much to Reſemble Indignation and Anger, It is Very Eaſy, for a truly Zealous Perſon If He be not upon his Guard, to Carry the Matter too far, to Intermix his own Humour with it, and to Offend and Prejudice thoſe whom He would Convert, and thereby render His Zeal more Miſchievous and Hurtful, than of any Uſe or Advantage.

Beſides, The Intention of the Zealous Perſon being to Promote God's Glory, and the Salvation of Souls; It ſometimes happens that Thoſe who are too Warm and Earneſt in their Proceedings, from a Lively Impreſſion of their Obligation to Purſue what they Believe themſelves Inſpir'd with, do not perhaps ſufficiently Conſider, Either the Time, or Place, or the Manner, and ſeveral other Circumſtances, which God, who is Jealous for All Good, Ever does Obſerve, with the Utmoſt Order and Wiſdom In Reſpect to us: Inſomuch, that This Harmony, which Conſiſts In the Adequate Proportion of Zeal and Diſcretion, being Untun'd, It Degenerates

generates Into Noiſe and Confuſion to the Prejudice of Souls, and the Service of Almighty God.

The Only true Notion of this Noble Vertue, Rightly Underſtood, repreſents it under a due Temperament and Modulation of all thoſe other Qualities that Belong to it: Thus Zeal, for Inſtance, in the Caſe of Love, is nothing elſe but an Earneſt and Sollicitous Deſire to Preſerve the Good One Enjoys, and to Remove far from it, whatever can either change its Nature or Deſtroy it; And This Sollicitude ariſes from the Regard and Love One has for Its Endearing Object: Thus Sacred Zeal is the Reſult of the True Love of God; and the Great Regard of a Pious and Charitable Soul for God's Glory, and the Spiritual Advancement of his Fellow-Creature: And this is nothing more than what the Bleſſed Apoſtle calls Charity; When He tells us, that * *Charity is very Patient, and Meek*; *It has no Envy in it*; *nor is it Raſh, nor Proud*; It is not Ambitious; Neither does It ſeek Its own Intereſt; It will not be angry; nor apt to Suſpicion; It rejoyces not in doing Wrong; But it is pleas'd with Truth; *It Beareth All Things*; *It Believeth All Things*; *It Hopeth All Things*; *It Endureth All Things*; Behold here the Character of True Zeal! * 1 Cor. 13. 4.

The Duty of a Truly Zealous Man, therefore, is to Love God, and his Neighbour; And, Then, to ſeek only the Glory of God, and His Neighbour's Good; But He muſt Begin with Himſelf to Practiſe the Zeal he has for the Service of God, by Rooting Out of his own Heart, And Convincing the World by the

Conduct of His Life, that He has Deſtroy'd and Mortify'd whatever could Prevent the Fruits of this Generous and Heroic Diſpoſition; And then afterwards He may proceed to be Warm in His Endeavours to do others Good; But when we neglect Our Own Salvation, And take ſuch Pains about our Neighbour's Welfare; When we are ſlow in Our Own Matters, and Furious and Precipitate in His; Fire and Tow at our Brother's Failings, But Calm and Unconcern'd at Our Own; This is a Prepoſterous and Empty Zeal, which Profits Little; which is taken ill; And often flies into an Exceſs of Rigour and Punctilio; Becauſe here Paſſion is Prædominant and has a greater Shate in it than Vertue.

VIII. This was the Standard the Bleſſed Jeſus ſet Before the Phariſees, when under a Zealous Pretence for the Law, they accuſed the Adulterous Woman before Him, and would have had Her to be Stoned; * *He that is without Sin Among you*, ſays this Righteous and Charitable Judge, *Let Him Caſt the firſt Stone at Her.* For That Zeal is by no means Juſt, Diſcrete, or Regular, where He who deſerves to be ſton'd Himſelf, ſhould be the Reformer, to purſue the Life of another Perſon! A Zealous Man muſt have no Aims at his own Glory, or to Magnify his own Reputation among Men; Otherwiſe his Zeal degenerates into Ambition; But He muſt Compaſſionate the Miſeries of Others; And not diſhearten thoſe who have been ſo Unhappy as to Run into the Ways of Death, by a too Rigorous and Severe a Rebuke, nor to Reject their Motions to Repentance, nor Haughtily to ſhun their Converſation, nor Refuſe

* St. John 8. 7.

fuſe them the Honour Due to Them; But Rather to Aſſiſt and Help, to Spare, and Gently Touch the Wounds; to Reſpect them Still, and Endeavour tho' by Juſt, Yet Gentle Means to Gain them In Order to their Cure: Let Him Reprimand the Tranſgreſſour with Coudeſcention, and Humility, Looking on Himſelf as the Greater Sinner of the Two; Leaſt He ſhould Come to Deſpiſe Him; And Turn His Zeal Into Diſguſt and an Averſion.

They whoſe Circumſtances Engage them to An Extraordinary Concern for The Souls of Mankind, are Expoſed, from their Special Obligations, this Way, to ſome Hazards and Dangers which the Reſt of the World are not Obnoxious to: For Altho' Their Own Failings are very Notorious, They are Still Under A Neceſſity to Exhort Others, to A Religious Life: Upon which They Labour Under two Extremities, Either of Being Unfaithful In Their Duty, by a faint, and Lukewarm Application In it, Leaſt they ſhould Bring upon Themſelves the Scandal, of Exacting That, from Others, to whom They Ought to be an Example, which They Contradict by their own Practiſe; Or Elſe to Act with too Much Severity, that They May Appear More Zealous for the Glory of God, and the Welfare of Souls than In Fact They Are: But Let them be as Induſtrious as They Will In Either of Theſe Two Extremes; They'll do but Little Good if their Life does Not Quadrate to Their Profeſſion: It's therefore Much to be Wiſht, that Thoſe whom God has Anointed with Authority, ſhould not Look upon Themſelves to be Above The Law they are Ordained to Maintain, and Impoſe upon

 their

their Subjects; For, by this Means, they will Neither be Scandalous, Nor whatever of it They Enjoyn, be Lookt upon as too Severe.

But although The Guides of Souls (Especially) should not Act what They Preach, We Ought not to Conclude from thence, that they have No True Zeal, or That what They are Appointed to Enforce is of No Service! Because the Blessed Jesus who Purchas'd with his Precious Blood, those Souls whom He has Entrusted and Left to the Care of His Pastors, May Impart to them, by the Instructions of these Imperfect Men, Those Blessings, which through their Own Failings they Have Rendred Themselves unworthy of. And it is Under this Confidence, that The Faithful Ought Entirely to Submit Themselves to the Conduct of Those, who Hold The Place of Almighty God: They Ought, Often, Both The One and The Other, to Cast Their Eyes upon the Life of The Blessed Jesus, The Most Indefatigable and, Supream Zealot for the Glory of His Father; and The Salvation of Souls; In Him They Would Learn Knowledge In Perfection, and All Truth, In its Purity without any Exception of Persons; In Him They will Behold an Invincible Patience to Bear the Rudeness, and Intractable Obstinacy of His Disciples; an Engaging Sweetness to Charm and Win the Most Harden'd Sinners; and Reclaim Them to Himself! An Heroick Constancy to Wink at Frailty, and to Return Good for Evil, and In a Word A Righteousness Ever full of Charity, which Has Disposed His Compassionate Soul, to Take upon Him All The Rigourous Hardships which We Have Deserved, whilst, out of Tenderness

derneſs to us, He diſpoſes All Things with Sweetneſs, and Accumulates his Bleſſings upon Thoſe very Enemies of His who are moſt Unworthy of them.

Behold Here the Model, the Bleſſed Example every One ought to Imitate, who Undertakes the Cure of Souls: If his Religious Endeavours are not mixt with Sweetneſs, a Charitable Diſpoſition, and Diſintereſſed Concern, altho' He takes never ſo much Pains, He will Reap but Little Fruit, and All His Labour will be In Vain.

A

Divine Contemplation

Upon Our Bleſſed Saviour His Hunger and Thirſt After Righteouſneſs.

O Inexhauſtible Fountain of All Bleſſings! I Return Thee a Thouſand Thanks for Thy Merciful Providence in Placing me in ſo poor a Condition in the World, ſince my Endleſs Miſeries preſs me continually to have Recourſe to Thy Goodneſs! For what Part is there in me that does not Crave for Thy Help, O my God! Altho' my Blindneſs hinders me from the Sight and Meaning of that Natural Propenſity towards Thee! Thou art the Original Author of All Bleſſings! Of thoſe that are

above, Becauſe They are All Included in Thine Eſſence; And of all Sublunary and Earthly Enjoyments, Becauſe they are all the Reſult of Thy Providence, the Diſpenſation of Thine Indulgent Hand, In Proportion to the Neceſſities of thy Dependent Creatures! From this Liberal Hand it is that My Eyes are Cheer'd with the Refreſhing Light! without which they would be Abſorpt and Clouded in Eternal Miſts of Outer Darkneſs! From hence my Blood requires the Nitrous Air, to Preſerve Life by the Reſpiration of my Breath! From Thy Generous Bounty 'tis, that Nature ſollicits Bread for the Nouriſhment and Support of Life! That, Like the Hart, it pants after the Brooks of Water to moiſten and aſſwage its Drought; It is of thy Bounty that it Conquers under the Struggles of thoſe Diſtempers that would Otherwiſe Diſſolve its Frame; that it expects the Day wherein to work for its Support; And the Night for its Repoſe and Laſſitude, wherein to Reſt from its Labours: To Thee it ſtill applys for Strength and Impulſe to its Motions for Succeſs in its Affairs, and a Remedy to All the Evils that Continually Environ and Surround it!

That Liberal Hand, which has Created Every Thing that can be Called Good, Diſpenſes to us, theſe Bleſſings according to Our Wants! 'Tis this that delivers the Captive Soul and ſets him free! In the midſt of our Enemies it is our Shield and Buckler to defend us! In Perils 'tis our Screen! And the Mediator to Interpoſe Between Us and Evil! And if it does Admit a Croſs Affliction to ſeize upon the Soul, 'tis ſtill the Sovereign Anodyne to ſoften its

Bitter

Bitter and Support it! When I devote my ſelf Entirely, And am wholly taken up with the Cares of this Life; And, forgetting this Almighty Providential Hand, I Apply my ſelf only to Human Supports! Were not Thy Bounteous Hand to Lend its Help, even at the very Time when I don't think of Asking it, and have Render'd my ſelf Entirely Unworthy of the Motion of its Little Finger In my Behalf, All that I could do would be to Waſh the *Ethiopian*, All Labour in Vain; For, Thou wilt not that I ſhould Owe any Thing that's Good, but to Thy Immenſe Bounty! That All this Earthy Part of me might ſtill be Craving Thy Continual Succour; And the Multitude of my ſucceſſive Miſeries might Become *Vocal*, and Never Ceaſe to Importune Thy Mercy!

For what muſt Become of My Soul, and what can it do to preſerve itſelf, that is ſo Naturally Poor and Helpleſs! But much more ſo, thro' Tranſgreſſion! To whom ſhall it have Recourſe If not to Thee, O my God! Thou, that ſtill Supporteſt it, even whilſt it is Sinning againſt Thy Majeſty and Juſtice! Who art Patient and Forbearing when it is Wandering away from Thee! Inſtilling Principles into it, and Informing it with Juſt Idea's of Truth and Divine Vertue! Inflaming its Affections with a Deſire After it, with Strength and Power to purſue it: And Unſhaken Conſtancy to Perſevere and to be Steadfaſt in it: Our Faith is the Gift of Thy Divine Grace, without which, As it is with the Pagan World, Thou wouldſt be the *Unknown God* to us! And Our Very Hope, the Foundation of All our Prayers and Devotions,

Would Flagg and Sink Into Nothing! And the Flame of Our Love to Thee would Presently Congeal, and die within us! Without thy Help and Succour all The Faculties of The Soul famish with Insatiable Hunger and Desire; for Thou Alone Canst Satisfie Their Cravings! Those Spiritual Gifts which Sublimate its Nature, Raising its Ambition up to Thee; And Informing it to Aspire after Those Infinite Glories, which thou Hast Created it Capable to Enjoy, Cannot Proceed from any Other Essence but thy Self: No Sooner are the Powers of my Soul Lanch'd out and Gone astray thro' the Impetuous Torrent of my Irregular Passions, from thy Rule, But they Grow Weak and fall Into Indigence and Misery! Because their Natural Bias Lead them towards Thee, who art the full and Superabounding Measure of their Happyness. All that They Pursue, Elsewhere, Enfeebles them; It Consumes Them; And makes them Lead a Life of Languishing Decay In a State of Misery and Famishing Necessity.

II. O Thou that art the Only and Perfect Rest of thy Miserable Creature! O Cast the Eyes of thy Mercy Upon me! And of thine Infinite Love and Compassion Reinstate this, the Result of thine Original Goodness; A Soul, that is Undone by its Own Ingratitude and Sin! For Thou Hast Made me Only For thy Self! And Thou Wouldst be my True and Only Solid Happiness! Thy Hands have Fashion'd me after Such a Manner, that Both In my Rational Soul and Human Flesh, I should Equally be thy Dependent Creature; And Want, Every Moment, Body and Soul, to Call on Thee to Answer the Perpetual Cravings that they are Always

ways Making; And the Meaning of it is, that when I Seek Thee, O my Supreme Felicity! I may Reliſh thy Gifts with the Greater Joy, and Receive thy Bleſſings with the more Abundance.

But Thou Beholdſt in me, O Lord, Something that's of a Monſtrous and Deformed Nature! 'tis True, Lord! I Believe it, I Confeſs, I Own it! And Yet I'm Raking up from Every Quarter of the World, thoſe Periſhing Goods, which, Like a Shadow, Glide out of my Hands! I Graſp the Wind; I feed my Self with air and Smoak; And am always Hungry; But alas it is not after Thee! My Thirſt is Never Quenched, But It is not after Thy Living Waters; Yet I Know, as Poor and Miſerable as I am, that * *One* Single *Day In Thy Houſe, is Better Than A Thouſand*, out of thy Preſence; Becauſe the Peace and Comfort which I Taſt In Thee, but Only from the Riſing to the Setting Sun, Recovers all my Strength, Drowns all my Sorrows; Repairs all my Wants; And fills my Soul with a Thouſand Tranſports and Delights: Whereas, Putting all the Reſt of my Life together, there is not a Single Hour of it to be Pickt out, wherin It can be Said I found any thing In Compare, Any Moments that afforded True and Solid Comfort, Such, as I found In thoſe other Intervals with Thee. I Acknowledge, Even In Bleſſing thy Mercy, that I Have Had but Very few that were Agreeable out of thy Service, and Yet Theſe Wretched Days Have Left me Nothing, but Repentance, And Sorrow, And a Deſire to Purge my Soul of that Fatal Poiſon which They Have Left in it.

* Pſ. 84. 15.

O Bounty

III. O Bounty Divine! * *Thy Mercy is Better than*
* Pſ. 63. 3. *Many Lives*! Becauſe All Thoſe Lives are full of Miſery; And Lead to Death! Deſtroy, In me this vile and Earthly Life which Keeps me In A Shameful Slavery; That Being Reſtored to the Liberty of Thy Children, I may fix my Heart Only Upon Thee! Shew Thy Self to This Blind, and Darken'd Soul; O Thou Pure, Tranſcendent Glory! And Diſpel, theſe Clouds, That it may Behold The Mire it Wallows in; And Begin Earneſtly to Deſire thine Aſſiſtance: Inſpire me with A Dread of Thoſe falſe Pleaſures that will End In my Deſtruction; And with an Abhorrence of Thoſe that I have Loved: Grant me That Inward Purity, that will Diſtinguiſh the True Value of things, Leaſt by my Ignorance I Loſe the Taſt of Thoſe Spiritual Enjoyments which Thou doeſt Ever Impart to Them that Love Thee!

I dare not, O my God! Expreſs, by my Words, The Vileneſs, the Unworthineſs, the Infamy and Vanity of thoſe things I have Loved Even to this Day; And to Hunger and Thirſt after, with a Longing which Ought Never to have Siez'd me but After Thee! I Only Confeſs before Thine All-ſeeing Eyes, which Pierce Into the Deepeſt Receſs of my Soul, that There is Nothing ſo Holy, But what I am Capable of Polluting, Unleſs Thou art Pleaſed to Defend it againſt my Profanations.

IV. O Moſt Divine Saviour! Who Knoweſt me So Perfectly! Thou art My *Jeſus*! My Redeemer! And the Remedy of All thoſe Evils that Thou ſeeſt In me! And which Thou Beareſt with Such an Inexpreſſible Patience, and Compaſſion! Look Into the Abyſs of my Miſeries!

ſeries! That, may Vaniſh and Be Swallow'd up In thy Mercies! Wouldſt Thou Vouchſafe to Baptiſe me In this Abyſs of thy Refining Fire, I ſhould Come Out of It Pure, Tranſmuted, and A New Creature; I ſhould then Begin to Approach Thee with All the Tenderneſs of the Fondeſt Heart; And Importune Thee with the Fervour of the moſt Enamour'd Soul! May it Pleaſe Thee to Remember that Thou haſt Said, * *Call upon me, In The Day of Trouble, and I will Deliver Thee; And Thou Shalt Glorifie me.* Behold here, O Lord! The Day of Trouble! Not of Any Temporal Affliction, or Diſtreſs; For that is More Advantagious, to me, Than the Affluence and Proſperities of This World; But the Diſtractions Into which my Fatal Extravagences have Precipitated me; upon this Account, moſt Merciful Father, I Invoke Thee, Out of The Depths Into which I am Fallen, and from which Gulph I Never Can Return without thy Merciful Aſſiſtance! * Pſ. 50. 15.

Take Pity on My Soul! Be my Redeemer Still! And Create In me a Pure Spirit! That I may be Enflam'd with a Deſire and Hunger After Thee, 'till I Can Satisfie My Soule with thy Plenteous Redemption! † *I have Cried unto Thee, O Lord, from The Depth of My Miſery! Lord!* † Pſ. 130. 1, 2. *Heare My Voice! And Let Thine Ears be Attentive to My Supplication!* Let me Engage my Soul, Only In Seeking Thee; Let me Only find my God! And Be Thou my Only Succour and my Life! All my Sacrifice of Praiſe, be Offer'd Only unto Thee, In This Vally of Tears; And O Let my Soul, Separate, and Diſengage from All theſe Groſs Earthly Objects, Rejoyce In Nothing but In Thee Alone!

O Father

V. O Father of Mercies! Thou Canſt not Refuſe me what I now Implore! For I Sue for Nothing Now, But what, Thou Whiſpereſt to my Heart, Thou wouldſt that I ſhould Have! O Let me Importune Thee, to Eradicate whatever there is In me that would Prevent the Operation of Thy Grace! I Acknowledge my Self Unworthy of This Mercy! But Let Thy Bounteous and Indulgent Love Grant *That* to The Importunity of My Flagrant Deſires, *What* thy Juſtice muſt Deny to my Demerits! There is no favour That Thou Canſt Poſſibly Owe to my Unworthineſs! I am too Well Aſſur'd, Even that I am Abſolutely Unworthy of the Leaſt of thy Favours, Through The Vileneſs of Thoſe Unclean Appetites which Thou Beholdeſt; And The Purity of Thy Nature muſt Abhor In me! But O Kind and Charitable Father! Remember How Thou haſt, for Thirty Years Together, been Enflam'd with the Deſire to make my Soul Happy! To Turn it Towards Thee! And to Refine its Notions, Into a *Seraphick* Aſpiration, and Sublime Love, that Soar'd up as High as Its Creator! Remember That Loving Anguiſh which Thou Offer'dſt to Thine Eternal Father to Expiate my Indifference, and Unconcern! And Since This Thirſt for my Salvation has Tormented Thee So many Years, And So often Preſt Thee In my Favour, Satisfie It, O Lord! In Granting me That which it Craves after from Thy Mercy!

VI. O Charitable and True Friend of Our Souls! It's Out of Thee we are Supply'd with All that's Wanting In us! When Thou didſt Converſe with us upon Earth, and Saweſt The Pollution of our Impure Hearts, Thou didſt Put Thine own

own Immaculate Innocence, Into The Counter Ballance! For This it was that thy Tears Flowed In such A Continual Stream From thine Eyes! That Thine Ears were Always Open to the Shrieks of our Craving Neceſſities; That Thy Sacred Lips, Each Day, Expreſs'd the Voice of Mourning; And Thy whole Nights were Spent In Sobs and Sighings, to Melt Thy Holy Father's Heart, and prevail with Him for The Salvation of Mankind! For This It was that Thou did'ſt Never Ceaſe to Groan, and to Lament the Hardneſs of Our Hearts; That Thine Own Moſt Tender, Charitable Soul felt No Pleaſure ſo Strong, and Ardent as to Mollifie and Soften them, and ſet thy Divine Love Into A Flame within them; Nor no Grief more Senſible than to ſee this Sacred Fire Fluttering and Extinguiſh In any One of us: In a Word, Thou didſt Labour under the Sharpneſs of this Spiritual Hunger and Thirſt for Me, and Every Other Soul Alive, as if Thou hadſt had but One Single Soul to Save!

Alaſs! Who are We, O Thou moſt Merciful Redeemer! that we ſhould Cauſe thee ſo much Care and Pains! What is it Thou Canſt Expect from me, that makes thee Labour In Such Grievous Anguiſhes, and be Parch'd up with ſuch A Burning Thirſt! Why doſt thou thus Grieve and Vex thy Love! O thou Gracious God! Why doſt thou not Gratify and fulfill thy Deſire In me! Haſt thou then Loſt Thine Almighty Attribute! Wherefore doſt Thou Indulge that Noble Gift Thou haſt Imparted to me of FREE-WILL, Since Thou See'ſt how I Pervert it to my Own Deſtruction! And Cauſe Thee ſo much Sorrow and Vexation!

Yes

Yes Bleſſed God, But ſo that it ſhall be no Longer at my Own Diſpoſal; From this Moment I Reſign it Into thy Hands! I devote it Entirely to thy Management; And will have it, from henceforward, to Conſpire, to Co-operate with Thee, In Thy Gracious Purpoſe to be Beloved of Thy Creature!

I do Love Thee, O my God! And O! Let this Flame within my Soul Increaſe and Grow ſtill Stronger Every Moment of my Life! Away, far from me All Strange Love! For thou Alone art the proper Object of my Heart! I know That's the Conqueſt Thou would'ſt Win! For Since Thou haſt Ordained, that when I Merit Any Bleſſing from Thee, I cannot Worthily be Recompenced, Unleſs Thou Thy Self Becomeſt my Reward; Thou alſo Claimeſt it as Thy Right, and that with the Utmoſt Juſtice, to be the Only Object Worthy of my Soul! How can this be Poſſible; O Thou Ineſtimable Treaſure, that Thou thus Giveſt Thy Self to Me; and after This that I ſhould Shamefully Proſtitute my Self to thoſe Vain Amuſements that are Unworthy of A Heart that's Capable of thy Love! Since Thou haſt Raiſed and Ennabled my Soul Even to the Similitude of Thine Own Image, O Let it not ſink down again Into its former Vileneſs and Degenerate Corruption! All that it Contains, I Devote as A Sacrifice unto Thee! And whatever Elſe Appertains to it, or Depends upon it! I Receive Thee as my Supreme Good; O do Thou Alſo take me to Thine Embraces as a Trophie of Thy Meritorious Acquiſition! Preſerve me as Thine Heritage, And Never, Looſe me More! And O! May I Never forſake Thee, My Lord! My God! And my Supreme Felicity. An

An Expoſition

Of the Lord's Prayer, in Relation to His Hunger and Thirſt After Righteouſneſs!

I. O Heavens! O Earths! Ye Hierarchy Above! And Thou Redeemed World! Aſſiſt and Join with me In my Song! Come Every Creature of the All-Puiſſant God! And Let us, All together, Sound his Praiſe; Let us Adore, and Pay Devotion to Our Great Creator! We Bleſs Thee, O Mighty God! And we Implore the Happy Condition (in which we may Hunger and Thirſt after Thy Love,) In the ſame Words Thou haſt Preſcribed to us! Thou Knoweſt what They Are, Since They Came from Thy Self! Thou wilt Vouch-ſafe a Favourable Ear unto them, ſince thou haſt Indicted them with A Deſign to Hear them; And through their Efficacy Thou wilt Vouch-ſafe An Anſwer to them by Enflaming our Souls with the Moſt Ardent Deſires to thy Love and Service! Since 'tis upon this Account that Thou haſt beſtow'd the Faculty of Speech upon us.

II. *Our Father*! Eternal Creator! Almighty Sovereign! God of All Mercies! Moſt Kind and Charitable Indulgence! In whoſe Regiſter of Love and Providence Every Creature is Inſered In its proper Claſs! Who Art Ours, to ſuch A Degree that there is Nothing In Thee but what we

we have a Share In; And ſo much A FATHER, as to Look upon us All as Thine Own, and thy Well-Beloved Children!

III. *Who Art in Heaven!* By this very Love, which [illegible] Thee To Prepare Thoſe Many Manſions for us, and Expect us In that Celeſtial Heaven which is Thy Dwelling-Place. O Raiſe up Our Souls thither! Although, Thy Wiſdom ſeparates us from that Happy State, whilſt we are determin'd to Continue in this Exile-State! This is not that Our Hearts ſhould be Divorc'd from thee! But that we ſhould the more eagerly Long after Our Everlaſting Home; And One Day, be Tranſlated Into Thoſe Bleſſed Regions! And Receive the Fulneſs of Joy In the Beatifick Viſion! Accept All Our Deſires, that, Having Now Remaining In us, Nothing But Diſguſt and Loathing, for the Dreſs and Filth of All Earthly Objects, our whole Soul may Aſpire and Impatiently Wiſh the Happineſs of Thy Fruition!

IV. *Hallowed be thy Name!* Give us to have A True Idea of Thy Dread Majeſty, and Greatneſs; As Alſo, of That Tenderneſs and Indulgence that The very Name of A Father does Imply; That we May know our own Happineſs In Being thy Children: Let this Epitome of the Greater World be Enlighten'd Into A True Knowledge of Its Creator; That Both Our Souls and Bodies, Our Affections, Works, and Words may Declare Our Relation to Thee! Let us Seek Nothing But This Glory, and Service; And. In Every Reſpect Appear to be the True Children of ſo Holy A Father.

Thy Kingdom Come! Remove, from Thine Heritage, whatever would withdraw us from Thee;

Thee; And do thou Alone take Dominion In Our Hearts! Conſider, O Merciful Father! The Many Dangers to which we are Expoſed! O Shorten the Time of Our Pilgrimage; And Call us out of This Painful Life, That we may Reſt from Our Labours, In Thy Boſom! How Canſt Thou Suffer It to Be that Thy Faithful Children, whoſe Hearts are fixed on Thee, ſhould be Deprived of Thy Sight! But, If 'tis Neceſſary, from Thy Providential Decree, that we muſt Sojourn In This Vally of Tears, ſome longer Time, Vouchſafe, at Leaſt, to take up Thy Reſidence In Our Hearts! Come! Then, O Father! O Bountiful Creator! Enter In! And Reign Abſolutely there! My Sovereign Lord! And Fix and Settle Thy Habitation In them! If my Soul is But ſo Happy as to Become Thy Kingdom Here Below; I am Content that Thou ſhouldeſt Protract My Everlaſting Poſſeſſions, In Thine Eternal Kingdom, till thy Wiſdom ſhall think Proper to Tranſlate me Into that State of Bliſs! For, In Truth, I Deſire Nothing But the Fruition of Thee, Neither In Heaven, Nor on Earth; And, Provided Thou doſt But Reign In Me, With an Abſolute, and Unlimited Dominion, My Deſires are Accompliſht and 'tis All I Ask!

Thy Will be Done. Come! Eternal Father! Extend Thy Puiſſance, and Exert Thy Power! Let Every Creature Own Thy Sovereignty, And pay Homage and Obedience to Thy Majeſty! To what Purpoſe have We A Being! And what Is it Worth, Unleſs It Anſwers The End of It's Creation, In Serving Thee! Thou haſt Informed us Bleſſed Lord of Our Duty, and Given us † *The Concluſion of the whole Matter* 12. 13. VI.

† Eccleſ.

Matter In theſe Words, where Thou haſt ſaid, that *We muſt Fear thee*; *And Keep Thy Commandments, For this is The Whole of Our Creation.* All that Thou Requireſt is but The Reſult of Thy Paternal Love; The Indulgent Providence of A Careful Father Who is Ever Sollicitous for Our Wants! How Can We then, be ſo Blind, as to Abandon Our Selves to Any Other Will but Thine! O Let This Righteous, This Holy, This Gracious, and Perfect Will of Thine, Abſolutely Sway in Earth, as It does In Heaven! And Let Every Perverſe, And Oppoſite Diſpoſition, Give Way and Fly Before It! Under Thy Divine Rule, The Bleſſed Spirits of the Upper World Enjoy Perpetual Peace, and Quiet; And Are Happy and at Eaſe; Free from all Fear and Apprehenſion of what Ever might Moleſt or Interrupt their Bliſs, In the Secure Poſſeſſion of Every Thingthat Can Add to their Felicity! Whence Comes It then, that Poor Mortals, In their Pilgrimage Upon Earth, whereWe are Encompaſs'd with Dangers, and Expoſed to The Malice of Our Mortal Foes, Should Truſt to A Broken Reed, or Place their Confidence In Fleſh! Giving up to The Fatal Suggreſſions of their own Weak Falſe, and Inconſiſtant Inclinations! Lord! Baniſh, from The Earth, All Theſe Impotent and Vain Securities! And Subject All The World to Thy Dominion, As The Heavens Bow at Thy Nod.

VII. *Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread.* Since the Support of Our Spiritual Interiour Life depends upon our Obedience; And Thy Bleſſed Will and Grace are the Subſiſtance of our Souls; Lord! Grant that, Being Fortified and Renewed

ed, Day by Day, by this Spiritual Food, which it Receives, and is ſtill deſiring; We may Aſpire after Thee, with an Inſatiable Appetite and Hunger: But it is Time, O Lord, that Thou ſhouldſt Begin Thy Work: Give us from this Moment, that *Living Bread* which is Infinitely more Nutritious than all other Proviſion! For we cannot be Secure, that we ſhall ever ſee to Morrow! And Vouchſafe to Continue this Bleſſing to us every Day We Live, till that Important Hour ſhall come, when there ſhall be no more Darkneſs to our Eyes for Ever!

And Forgive us Our Treſpaſſes. Let not My Tranſgreſſions hinder Thee from Granting me this Favour: I do not in the leaſt, deſire Thee, O Lord! to Diſpenſe with thoſe Obligations, Thou haſt laid upon me, to Love and Serve Thee! This is a Debt that I would always Pay; And never would Pretend to be Diſcharg'd On this Account; But Diſcharge my Soul of thoſe Sins, and that Guilt I have Contracted! By Robbing Thee of the Honour that was thy Due; And Proſtituting it to the Creature! I can never make Thee Satisfaction for what I owe Thee upon this Account; But by Withdrawing my Heart from all Created Objects! And this Sacrifice I offer unto Thee, O Lord! All Cold, and All Frozen and Impure as it is! Lord! Accept and make it Clean even to ſuch Purity that it may be Acceptable and Pleaſing to Thy Sight. VIII.

As We Forgive Them that Treſpaſs Againſt Us. Thou haſt Promiſed, O Lord! to forgive me, In obliging me to forgive thoſe who Offend me! As Thou wouldſt that I ſhould be ſo Liberal,

All helpleſs and poor as I am; How canſt Thou be Reſerv'd in my Forgiveneſs, Being ſo powerful as Thou art! I forgive my Enemy from the Bottom of my Heart, in Obedience to Thy Commands; Do Thou then Graciouſly Diſcharge me, in Anſwer to Thy Promiſe!

IX. *And Lead us not into Temptation.* Finiſh Thy Work, O Lord! Let Thy Guardian Providence be over me! O take Thou the Charge of my Conduct upon Thee! And Deliver me from the Temptations that Diſtract me! Thou deſireſt not, O Eternal Father! That Thy Children ſhould have more Laid upon them than They Can Bear! And Thou Knoweſt what We Loſe if we flinch or be overcome! Prove us, then, and Try our Hearts, according as Thou wilt; But, O let the Encounter be Determin'd, and Thy Trophies Gain'd from the Puiſſance of Thy Love!

X. *But Deliver Us from Evil.* Amen. Thou, O Lord! art Senſible How frail and Corrupt this Fleſh is! With how many Evils 'tis Encompaſs'd; And to what Dangers We are Expoſed In this State of Baniſhment! Thou ſeeſt that without Thy Aſſiſting Grace we can do Nothing! Thou haſt Promiſed, O Heavenly Father! That Living Water to thy Children, which will Sublimate each Heart, into which it is Infuſed! AndRaiſe the Soul to the Heighth of an Immortal State of Bliſs! Even to the Fruition of its God! O how my Soul pants after that Salutary Water and that Bread of Life! Lord! Aſſwage its Hunger, and Quench its Thirſt! That being fed, and ſatisfied In Thee Alone, It may never Reliſh any Thing but Thy Sweetneſs!

O

O Mother of Mercy! Whoſe Soul was Ever Soaring above the World; And Aſpiring Only after thoſe Eternal Treaſures that are not Seen; Have Pity On the Offspring of the Fallen *Eve*; Baniſht from their Country! And of Thy Gracious Goodneſs, Help me to this Heavenly Fire, which ought to be all our Comfort, whilſt we are here Sojourning In our Exile Condition: Ye Happy Souls, who ſtill Deſire with Aſſurance, freſh Communications of Bliſs, and Enjoy In Plenitude, what you ſtill deſire; Aſſiſt us, In our Breathings after thoſe Eternal Joys which you Poſſeſs, that we may never ceaſe Our Purſuits of them; But by Your Interceſſions, may at Laſt Enjoy them In your Communion, In the Church Triumphant. *Amen.*

The End of the FIRST PART.

THE